

Chapter 1: Origins

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It all began one fateful morning, beginning as normal as any other day.

ring ring* *slam* Yami awoke; shutting his clock off, he cursed his lack of sleep once again; for him it was another restless night, full of mysticism and curiosity; who were those people? What did they want?; as he troubled to remember; he rose from his bed and gazed out the window; the rain had finished; therefore, the lawn was covered with a shiny dew; as he wondered about what today would hold; his brother, Genso yelled from down the stairs “Rise and shine; time to get up pal!”, “alright, I’m coming downstairs!” Yami yelled back; although he thought school was rather bothersome; he knew the importance of it. He began getting ready; first with socks, then his standard uniform for Yashiharou school of Academics and Martial

Arts; a school known for its competition, yet at the same time also maintained prestige for the academics; Yami had thought it was a system made for exploitation; nonetheless, even with this philosophy he didn't seem to enjoy the surroundings of it. Genso decided to walk with him that day to school; a formal gesture of an older brother helping a younger sibling; Yami didn't mind it since he thought Genso was an interesting person to speak with. Genso had a charisma that Yami looked up to and it became apparent that Yami would have to get more experience in order to compete with his brother's aura. Unknowing to both Yami and Genso was that today would be an encounter that would change their lives.

A Fateful Encounter.

On their expedition towards Yashiharou, Genso and Yami come across a very particular noise. It was rather vapid and inputting for their

environment; as this was a smaller town; nothing too exciting occurred to it; at least on the surface that is. The duo gazed upon a pond on the edge of the embankment and they saw a shadow of a figure fishing in the water by flailing its arms, grasping for any possible movement. Genso after observing this behavior for some time, spoke to the shadow, “hey you!,aren’t you being a little too wild?” The figure looked up and in a frenzy and dashed over to the pair yelling “dang it; I almost had it,I tell you!.” Yami stepped forward, “now who might you be?”, “I’m Apollo, I tell you! The eccentricity that surrounded his speech indicated to Yami that Apollo was a rather strange person. Yami then proceeded to make a comment about Apollo’s ears, “oh okay,what.... how dare you”? “huh?” “Why are you such a boring person.....” Apollo stated spitefully, Yami continued “well the ears for one thing....” Apollo then went to rub his ears; “what’s is wrong with them...?”, “they look

ridiculous...” “oh yea... what's that supposed to mean?” Yami looked down and mumbled “how dense.” Apollo still agitated about the perceived insult stated “is that an insult... want to fight friend? Apollo took a fighting stance.... Yami with a frown on his face replied... “well I guess I dragged myself into this.. Alright,” Yami took a reciprocal stance, Apollo charged in with a full frontal assault, first a swoop kick; yami somersaults back; Apollo approaches and launches multiple jabs; Yami is able to counter punch with a straight; Apollo steps back; he moves full tilt to Yami’s side and hits him with an feinted liver blow while Yami was blocking above; “ugh!”, Yami stumbles back; Yami taunts as Apollo jets in; Yami hits him in the face with a elbow; and then a few straights to the chest; as both of them have each other marked; both approach for a simultaneous attack; each took the other’s concentrated punch in the face; as

Yami launched forward he says “hey look over there...,” Apollo looked over, responding “wait where?” Yami steps in and uppercuts Apollo and sends Apollo on the ground. This win is for Yami “hey, that was a rather unfair move; dont’cha think?” “them's the breaks” shrugging as Yami helps Apollo up from the fertile plane; “Apollo reacts “you know bud; you can fight pretty well; “what's your name?” Yami. “Not so bad yourself”, while Genso witnessed the boys fighting he thought *‘ah this reminds me of an earlier time;nonetheless,there is no time for reminiscing;* the boys headed off to school. Yami was shocked to see that Apollo was in the same class for the new year. Soon both Yami and Genso found out that their father had served in the war with Apollo’s father, Helios; and in a bout of irony, the Ata family had just moved back to town from a instillation that Helios was working at.

Genso

Genso was a young man of tall stature, standing at 185 cm tall, Genso wore a black and purple jacket, along with a trilby that covered his medium length black hair. When the group arrived at the school, Genso brook off from the other two members to attend his advance studies, at this time he was planning on working in the field of Research and Development; the question that had been bothersome is when would he get his breakout into the Scientific Industry. One day as Genso was walking home with his girlfriend; her name was Suki, a quite charming woman with long black hair and a slim figure, she was genuine but nonetheless very assertive in her ways. She had mentioned to Genso that a German Lab was moving into the city of Yashiharou. The lab was to be a hub for technology and other secret designs; the image that came to mind in

Genso's head had piqued Genso's interest in the matter, but he wasn't optimistic for his luck in getting into such a substantial development. As Genso was pondering the institution when he accidentally bumped into a friend of his named Eishiroshi; she was a very solemn young lady in that, she wasn't too talkative, but she had a certain way about her that Genso liked but he couldn't put his finger on what it was exactly. The Papers she was holding were scattered everywhere and Eish bent down to try to clean up and Genso offered to help her. "No really it's fine..." as she blushed; Genso was a bit entranced by her cute nature she exhibited until; Suki whacked Genso hard in the back of the head... "ow!" Genso yelped, "you deserve it" retorted Suki. Still embarrassed, Eish asked "So how are you guys doing today?", "Well ... " said Genso before Suki interrupting him.. "we are talking about the future after we finish school." "Oh yea!

you are interested in science Genso, right?"

Asked Eis, "yes," replied Genso as he bowed his head. Suki then proceeded to say that "we were discussing about the new laboratory that is going to be installed in the city over... you know the German institute;" "oh yea? my uncle is friends with someone who is going to work there, maybe I could arrange a meeting of sorts", Eis Stated "wow that would be amazing, you are great Eis". Suki, then interrupted the sentimental moment, stating "it sure would be good if he got working on making some money soon, instead of always working on his gadgets and magic." Eis then process to make some phone calls. After she finishes, she relies on the news to Genso and he replies; "well, shucks why don't I give it a try".

In the morning, Genso woke up in the morning and put on a suit that Suki had pushed him to wear, he began the track to the institute;

Genso felt nervous at the nature of the job he was looking into as he thought the atmosphere would be very tense and uncomfortable... He began by knocking on the door. "Who is it?" asked the security guard. Genso announced "I am Genso Tenshi and I am here for a scheduled interview with Dr. Kaufspalding," the guard acknowledged him and showed him the way to the office of Dr. Kauf Spalding. Genso crept into the dimly lit hall.. a strange sight for the Young man, he found the number next to the door and knocked on the door three times. '*no answer..*' Genso anxiety started to wonder if he had made an error on the time as it was quite early in the morning to go for an interview... he noticed;however,that the door was opened a smidge, he moved to open the door slowly to check if anyone was there.. the room was much larger than he expected, it contained all kinds of strange gadgets ,and even some gadgets lined the wall as if they were a wall

decoration of a themed party. Genso began to observe his surroundings closer and his first impression was that it looked as if he were looking into the vast lair of a madman; that is when he noticed a dim light in the corner, next to one of the exits; so he approached the area while staring at a strange man sitting in a chair, he was so focused, it seemed as if he were mesmerized in what he was tinkering with. Genso called out “Hello sir? Are you Dr. Kauf Spalding? no answer came back he slowly continued to approach the man and tapped him on the shoulder a cold stare slowly angled his head to look at Genso... I’d like the usual please.... no sir, my name is Genso, I am here for the appointment ...,” Dr Kaufspalding adjusted his neck and stood up and went to grab for a glass of water when suddenly the realization hit him like a brick; “Oh! Ah, that’s right.... my apologies, my boy... I have been awake for...; what day is it?” “Monday sir” Genso

replied with some hesitation. “Oh! It has been 3 days; I figured as much” commanded the doctor with a trickster’s grin. “These experiments can be tiring when you get too involved”, the doctor murmured and continued with “Please sit down, dear lad and let’s converse about your future here. The introduction became a satisfying reply to Genso since it illustrated to him that this man was not a hard man to deal with but rather an old man who had the potential in him to teach him a great deal. “Tell me about yourself; what are your ambitions and why should I hire you as my assistance?” asked Dr. Kaufspalding, “My name is Genso Tenshi, and well; I know that your group is involved with experimenting with steam and its implication for future development of this nation” stated Genso. “I appreciate your analytical thinking on a broad scope, though I question your mindset on applications of this technology, and how it can be used in a beneficial

manner for the common people, what do you foresee as a potential project that may just rewrite the books? What I am looking for is someone who understands what is, what could be and what will be. These traits are crucial for proper development of steam technology”

weighting the response, “I have read some rather intriguing stories about past uses of steam that indeed exceed the current usage; I feel as if society needs to rediscover these methods in order to establish a more utopianism scenery”

Genso replied with a sophisticated manner that was enhanced by an intense study session. “I like the idea, stated Dr. Kaufspalding, however; in my presence you don't have to take such a professional manner while talking to me, if need be, explain it in a way that a common man may understand; there are those people who can explain something in a technical manner, but you would be challenged to find someone who could

explain ideas in a way that everyone could understand.” Genso, relaxed a bit; he had been experiencing a lot of tension that he had built up from a preparation mentality that he had been practicing. The interview continued on for another hour, it ended with the doctor bowing and stating that Genso would receive a phone call within the next day or so telling him whether or not he was the man for the job.

yami

In the new sphere of mutual respect, Yami had a looming curiosity of the extent of Apollo’s quirkiness; but also, his fighting prowess, would he be a formidable opponent that he could; perhaps, train his techniques with or maybe Apollo’s extent of fighting was rather limited to a

select skill and nothing more. This mindset was very characteristic of Yami, who found it difficult to let go of a pressing question on his mind, a trait that he shared with his brother; however, he took this perspective into a more pragmatic rationale and adapted as events came about through scenarios in which he was exposed to. Beyond Yami's cool demeanor, he had a sense of humbleness; in which, given the chance he would prefer to be honest and condone integrity; nonetheless, he understood the laws of this reality, that in order to self-sustain himself, he would need to use some tricks to get his ideals followed through. Yami continued contemplating his ideas and then took to a quiet slumber in his bed. During the night, Yami began experiencing a strange sensation, he thought it must be a sudden rise in temperature that would accompany the passing of the night; however, as the sensation became more noticeable, it reminded him of

when he first was experimenting with the ideas of lucid dreaming; a way of having more interaction with one's dreams was right down the alleyway of Yami's mind; still this was different; he began seeing a misty curtain that had blinded his view, but then a small flash from the corner of his eye '*what was that*' thought Yami? A very eerie sound came from a far distance, he felt himself start to sweat on the outside. He began to walk closer to the luminous star like light. Yami was then thrust into a different scenery, it seemed to be a room for a royal, there were clocks and trinkets lining the wall and grasping the floor; '*what is this place*', as it became clear that this was no ordinary dream; a small boy came out of the corridor and told Yami to follow him and that "they" were waiting. "who are they?" questioned Yami. The boy responded in an uncanny manner, "you will find out soon enough" Yami then proceeded to walk on the

shallow tile, it felt as if he was walking on a thin layer of clay. When Yami entered the door, he saw a blinding light, Yami went to cover his eyes when, “We’ve been waiting for you Mr. Tenshi” standing where two young mistresses who were dressed in an aristocratic dress; each holding a staff. “Who are you two and why am I here?” expressed Yami. The manner in which you speak is rather unfitting for a gentleman, please. Now, “I am Star and this is my sister Shiloh, we are the guardians of this realm. Our duty is to maintain a certain balance within this realm, now we've summoned you because we find you to be particularly interesting in your situation. Yami finished collecting himself and asked “I thought that these are my dreams, why I am here instead of dreaming of what would be considered normal?” “As guardians of the realm we have certain abilities to interact with lesser beings, now the reason why you are here is that you may

hold a key to the puzzle we've long sought to discover." wait a minute... this must be a plot from a movie or something there is no way that this is a legitimate reason for me to stand out."

Shiloh spoke for the first time "you have a potential that is rare in these times, a sort of ability to utilize the energy surround you, you may have not realized it yet, but you are indeed a valuable person. you should chin up because with your help we can find the long lost piece of the puzzle we've been searching for a long time."

"What are you looking for?" asked Yami. "There is a chest on one of the islands off the shore of Japan, it contains a very inquisitive material that cannot be replicated by just anyone, legend says that if you can access it, then you can get a special ability that allows for even manipulating of reality and you are going to assist us with your potential; and if not you will become our enemy. Yami stood there shocked about what he was

hearing, “listen, I don't care who you are, I don't like your attitude and you are not getting my help with anything.” stated Yami “Very well” stated Shilo ... the dream ends..... time passes....

Yami woke up in the morning and began thinking about the dream he had last night; “it must be nothing,” he thought as he walked down the stairs; however, in the back of his mind was an idea that maybe it was true; what were the consequences? While Yami began preparing his breakfast, his father, Mr. Kurai Tenshi asked him “How are you? You don't look like you had a good sleep, is there anything wrong? No, I'm fine, thanks for asking stated Yami solemnly. “Alright, if you want to mention something, then I'll lend a ear, oh yeah.. I'm going to reacquaint with an old war buddy of mine; he just moved into this area.” “Is he a former pilot such as yourself?” asked Yami. “yes, he and I had a bit of a rivalry when we were fighting the enemies, we'd have a

competition to see who'd make it the most flashy..

“Ha-ha” laughed Kurai. “It was always apparent it was from you who Genso got his charisma from” mentioned Yami. “You are a reflection of your mother Yami” consolidating Yami. Yami’s mother, Artesia Valentine, was a diplomat for foreign relations, so it was common for her to be away for long periods of time, she had been gone for 3 months this time; the reason was because of a breakdown of negotiations of two major players on the international stage; so it was risky to travel home at least for a little while. “Well, I better let you get to your schooling, take care my son” Yami left the house and began his journey.

Apollo

The time of year was early December, as the temperature had dropped, the sky showed an eagerness of wanting to release a thin layer of crystal clear water on the land below; snow had begun to drop subtly on the head of a particular

young man, who went by the name of Apollo. Apollo wasn't considered extraordinary by any stretch of the imagination at first glance, sure he had a rather prominent name; One named after the protector of good against evil; however, Apollo was someone who possessed a nature of mindlessness; he would forget the simplest of items if he was set on a particular task of importance, yet this focus of his would provide him the motivation to pursue tasks in a thorough and sophisticated manner whereas his colleagues possessed a thin layer of knowledge of a good amount of subjects and showed mediocrity; he'd master techniques that would become the envy of his competition. Apollo wasn't a physical phenomenon, he was of average height, 175 cm, a slim build with some modest muscles, blue eyes and blonde hair that would ravaged in the wind, despite his teacher objections. One aspect he hid nonetheless was that he had a special trait, his

ears were able to fold back and looked as if they were ears of a cat when listening attentively for sounds that he did not recognize. This ability allowed for Apollo to develop a sharp attention while going on his daily basis. Apollo had begun attending Yashiharou on the grounds that his family, more specifically his father wanted to search for his comrade from the war, not only that, but also Helios had a particular feeling about the ways in which the country was developing; so they settled on moving in the year 87 F.E. The town of Yasuharu was a an land section that contained mainly farms and a military installation that has been developing steam based technology. Most see this as a mundane effort, yet only those who have seen the steam powered technology know the potential of this energy being developed. Overseeing this complex and essential functions of the city was an organization called “The

counsel” for practical administration. There are very mysterious in their methods and in all reality speak very little to the town’s people; giving the group a dangerous aura and a sense for the town's folks to keep to themselves. Apollo had overheard some stories about the war from his father, Helios and even the elusiveness of the council; however, Apollo was not the type to sit back and take orders from a group of shady people, so he did his own investigation when his tasks were done for the day; Hikari, Apollo’s brother would assist Apollo on his quests and would make fun when they were fruitless. It wasn't that Hikari liked making fun of Apollo, it was more that Hikari wanted to challenge Apollo to step his game up and move away from mediocrity. Apollo is a young man with some interesting traits such as: Apollo maintained a goofy personality while around others; however, when intrigued he got quite serious about

specific tasks advantage, as he felt was “worth it”, a trait that would be shared with Ankoukou, and would lead to a solid foundation for their friendship.

Hikari

Hikari Ata was born 70 FE in a town called, Odatykatsu. Odatykatsu was the central mining complex in the southern part of the continental land; its impact during the great war was immeasurable; and thus the local people of the area maintained a strong pride in their work. Hikari had worked in these mines in order to scrape together some extra income; as well as maintain a physical appearance that bolstered his high sense of duty. The work was rather

routine; nonetheless, it gave him some time where he could think for hours on end about his next piece of fiction that he wanted to develop, his main interests were times of great darkness, a hero would arise to fight and conquer this evil, along with this scheme he had a fondness for loud music performed on guitar as it reminded him of his youth that he particularly idolized.

Apollo moved to Yashiharu when he was 17 and just about finished his studies; he had developed a hybrid of fighting styles he learned in the mines based around heavy hits and fast movements of peaking in and out; comparable to modern Boxing, jokingly he named this style Steel Fu, and ran with the name as it seemed to stick. Hikari's father, Helios had a sense of humor, so he had called Kurai on the phone and after formalities arranged a bet that his son was far more suitable to fighting than Genso. Kurai and Helios had a friendly rivalry so the two agreed to arrange a

meeting, and in synchronicity, Genso Tenshi and Hikari Ata met. At first they seemed rather complacent about how to interact, after all it seemed like a pain in the ass that their fathers were collaborating about nonsense. Eventually, a silence brook with Genso asking if Hikari did any practice of martial arts, and perhaps a friendly bout was in order. Standing 185cm tall Genso had a slight edge in height over Hikari; nonetheless they were evenly matched and finished fighting when Genso had respectively moved slightly faster in the first bout and knocked Hikari down, they began again; this time Genso was knocked down by a sweep from Hikari. When round 3 was going to start, Genso noticed the time and stated “Nice fighting ya pal, but I gotta jam; got places to see” “till next time”, Hikari replied. Neither were happy with this tie and a rivalry began in satire just as their fathers had planned. Hikari returned later that evening and began thinking about what

it meant to have met your match; after all Hikari was not someone who lost much, so he began devising ways to trick Genso into submission, after a while of long thought; Hikari decided to hit the cot in order to get some much needed rest. Tomorrow he whispered as he drifted off to sleep. The following morning, Hikari woke up with a sharp headache that contrasted the calm background of his room “maybe I got hit a little too hard that last round”, chuckled Hikari. Hikari went on his casual root to the institution, the place was rather boring Hikari thought,” that guy yesterday was sure something, I got to pay him back next time!” As Hikari was walking down the narrow path with blossoms spread in abundance, he overheard a conversation about a mysterious boat traveling through the sea last night, maybe there were more but the eyewitnesses were not able to see clearly this strange vessel or vessels. Strange and the town of Odatykatsu didn't really

sit well with Hikari but he decided to ignore this idea to focus on his daily routine. On the other end of the pond, Genso had just picked up his first hat, and he chooses a Trilby. He liked to show class in his dress so he thought the black hat would go well with his purple and black outfit, perhaps he could charm a local woman, since he hadn't been out and about as of lately since he'd been running experiments and trying new tricks with his cards. His goal was to make it into a lab and complete

“Something great” he wasn’t sure what that was exactly, but It was a boyhood dream that he had kept up into the present and was invested in it; his hobby would land him to meet a very special woman, Suki.

Chapter 2: The Core

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A rain shower deluged into the night, under the sound of rain, there was a silence of which, under a lamp post stood a young woman, her name was Suki. Suki was an individual from a small town in the middle of what the locals joked as nowhere, and because of this upbringing, she felt comfort when it came to mellow and low key people and things. She moved to the city of Yashiharu when she was 13 years old, in part due to, her parents losing the local farm due to continuous drought. During her travel, she came across a young man by the name of Genso. Genso was a particular fellow, who possessed personality quirks that may have rubbed others wrong; however, Suki found that they were one of the aspects she felt was

interesting about him, Genso had a fondness towards the magic arts in which, he practiced daily, even to the dismay of his father who wished for him to work in the Sciences to which over time, he conceited to since he had a rather strong interest in the field to begin with. Suki on the other hand had an affinity towards animals, specifically the crow; therefore, she would attach a small letter against its leg so through the crow, Genso found letters from his friend, he would send her ideas and thoughts they had arranged and over time lead to them becoming good friends. Genso decided one day that it was time to ask Suki on a date on that day; however, Genso received a message from Suki in which entailed that Suki's dog had gone missing and that she was very distraught. Genso put on his jacket to look for the dog, he began looking near the local lake Orono. Fortunately, Genso had lived close by and was able to search and saw the dog fighting

to catch its breath in the current in the lake. Genso decided to jump in, he fought through the currents and after some failed attempts, finally was able to rescue the dog. This heroic deed gained Suki's gratitude and Genso was pleased with himself. The following day, he asked her to go out and she readily accepted. This advanced relationship allowed the young couple began to go on adventures together quite often. And so began a new chapter where, Genso taught methods to Suki of the ways of magic and trickery. This knowledge enabled Suki to get away with clever little tricks of sorts with her classmates and provided a fun and entertainment for all who gathered. This talent of hers allowed her a new vision in her next journey.

The Countryside

During the war of LǎoXinFáng Aggression.

Mr. Helios Ata was a lead scientist on steam

technological advancements. Helios was not a fan of the council government, but he nonetheless did not prefer to be occupied by a foreign power. During the war he met Mr. Kurai Tenshi; a man from humble beginnings who ended up scoring high marks to begin his career in the military; Kurai wasn't interested in the office life of the officers though; moreover, he had a passion for flying these new mechanical inventions; called aircrafts. The thrill of flying excited him and Helios respected that ambition. Helios military thoroughfare became intersected with Kurai's path after he discovered that Kurai Tenshi would be the first test pilot of one of Helios's most recent prototype models. The team formed a bit of a rivalry, as Kurai kept pushing the limits of Helios' models, Helios in return, rushed to produce more complicated systems for Kurai to investigate. The rivalry grew to a climax, when Helios designed a plane that Kurai couldn't

initially figure out before the scheduled test run;however, in his stubborn determination to outwit Helios led him to carry out the test run anyways. This turned out to be a mistake, when Kurai lost control and crashed sustaining serious injuries. After Kurai's recovery, Helios realized that his pride had caused him to jeopardize the life of a comrade, if he had died, Kurai's family would have been left without a father. Helios decided to make a truce with Kurai, and the two decided to start fresh, over time they grew to become close friends. The war's impact caused the people to unite;the major population focused on the war effort's main goal of defeating the enemy while trying to lessen the damage to the nation;however, there were internal conflicts brewing in the midst of this chaos. The power sharing agreement within the nation had been a foundation,yet among its members where a group called the Council. The Council's image was

of a small group of individuals who had the people's interest inside; nonetheless there were factions inside this Government who had their own vested interests and their name was "Enryo Sora"; they were a group of noblemen who took upon themselves to maintain peace within the local domains; they had been founded as a just organization yet, as the original members retired; they were replaced by a number of groups with vested interests. The role of this organization will set off a major turn of events in the near future.

To the modern day

Yami proceeded to hit his alarm clock, *'damn.. another night thinking about that awfully realistic dream; judging by their appearances Star and Shiloh were clearly old fashioned; wait was that really their names? There wasn't any reason for them to lie to him, but yet a sense of curiosity surrounded what they had said'* Yami thought. *'Laying here thinking wouldn't do anything, maybe*

I should call Apollo' Yami considered. Yami began rotating the dial, "Hello?" Apollo answered. "It's been a few days Apollo, want to grab a bite to eat?" Yami asked. "I get to pick the restaurant!" Apollo roared. "Sounds fine" Yami replied. The duo meet up and begin to venture into town. "What is going on Apollo?" questioned Yami, they took a deep look at the surrounding building structures; it seemed as if there was a war zone out there judging by the damage to multiple buildings; the local population had been receded inside in order to protect themselves. In the distance there was a group of young men wearing black leather jackets and causing a loud ruckus. "It would be better if we could ignore these idiots" Yami stated. "If you say so", Apollo stated lowering his tone of voice. They walked towards the one shop that still was serving food at this time, One bowl of noodles, please Apollo asked, the shopkeeper proceeded to tell the back;

and “what about you sir?” he asked. “The same please” Yami replied. Yami and Apollo begin to start eating; while half way through their meal, the group of hooligans began to enter the shop; they proceeded to try to woo the local girls sitting at the dinner much at their dismay. One of the grunts noticed Yami and Apollo eating and decided to head over to them; he thought Apollo’s outfit was stupid and he wanted to make fun of him; as he gets up close to Apollo, he starts saying “hey, weirdo; what brings you here?”, Apollo, more concerned with his food at first ignored the insult. “You’d better pay attention or else we’re going to have some problems,” in the meantime, Yami was observing the group’s behavior and decided that they weren’t much of the threat so therefore he reasoned that Apollo wouldn’t have much of an issue dealing with this guy, he thought. “Are you going to keep ignoring me if so we can throw down bud” shouted the grunt. “The

only thing I'm throwing down is the money for this food here" said Apollo. "hey guys we got a funny guy over here, it will only take me a minute to beat your ass!" yelled the grunt. "Funny I wasn't trying to be funny" replied Apollo to the fellow, after the comment the grunt begins to cock back his fists and tried to hit Apollo, a few centimeters before Apollo was impacted, Yami stepped in and grabbed the guy's fist while he was following through with the punch, Yami stated "hey man that wasn't cool", the thug replied "what the!?" Yami countered, remarking, "We're just here to enjoy some food, if you can't accept that then be ready to solve this with our fists," Yami announced with frustration lining his face. The grunt announced to the group, "you heard the man let's throw down!" Apollo stood there in shock, he never took Yami as someone to instigate a fight, yet he did like that spirit that emanated from his aura.

The restaurant grew silent with anticipation of what was going to happen, the grunts surround both Yami and Apollo, The leader initiated the brawl, he punched straight towards Yami, Yami sideswiped the punch away from him, he then countered by lowering his body and gave the thug an uppercut to the face, The thug became dazed from the hit and took two steps back and then cocked his head “we got a real fighter here boys,” he proclaimed;meanwhile, Apollo was standing there watching the fight when two of the thugs ganged up on him and while he was distracted, they hit him in the stomach, Because of this, Apollo got angry and yelled “you bastards!” and proceeded to hit back by running up to one of the thugs and kick them in the face utilizing his long train flexibility, Apollo optimized his advantage and stunned one of them,then moved to the second thug and hit him in the liver then while the man was stunned he

jumped up in the air and kicked the thug in the side of the head, the attack knocked him to the ground; after the show of martial arts prowess, it seemed as an endless horde of thugs came rushing in the restaurant. The leader had managed to grab Yami and throw him into a table, he then reached towards his pocket and pulled out a knife, Yami thought to himself '*oh shit, this is getting serious*' his neurological process began to go in overdrive, he slowly stood up and ran at the leader, the leader lunged with his knife towards Yami's chest; however, Yami moved by his outer arm and placed his leg between the thug, he used his arm to wrap around the guy's neck and moved his body weight to throw the man to the ground all in a brief moment. The thug was still carrying his knife so Yami kicked it out of his hand. This result not being satisfactory for Yami, he stood the leader up, and he grabbed him by the collar, he

ran with the guy held in his fist towards the nearby wall, Yami slammed his head against the wall as hard as he could. The result from this vicious assault knocked the leader out unconscious. Simultaneously, while these events were taking place Apollo was having a bit of a challenge dealing with 5 thugs on the other side of the room, Yami noticed that Apollo was struggling because of the amount of people he was fighting. Yami thought '*it seems like we all have more training to do*', Yami rushed over to Apollo and swept two of the thugs knocking them off their feet, Apollo take advantage of this and grab two of the thugs and smash their heads together, knocking both of them out with 4 of them now down there was only one guy remaining. The thug stood there in disbelief, Apollo looked around "your boss is knocked out you guys should probably retreat" the thug angry at the defeat; "screw you guys!, we'll be back" he

then helped his fellow thugs to their feet and they carried their boss out the door with their heads hanging in defeat. As the commotion ended the shopkeeper came out of the back to look at what was left of his place, Apollo moved towards him and said “What a bunch of troublemakers, I’m glad that we could help you out,” the owner grafted, “help?... who is going to help clean up this restaurant?” in a sarcastic tone of voice. Yami went up to Apollo stating “If you had trained more, this place wouldn’t be in such a mess considering those guys were chumps and all” in antagonizing manner. Apollo replied “ yeah yeah” The shopkeepers stepped in “ listen boys we help me clean up this the food is on the house” Yami looked guilty because his conscience was getting to him “oh.. alright, I guess having some extra good karma would be useful”. The duo began cleaning up the restaurant for the next couple hours. Scene.

The following day, Yami woke up, got dressed and after a short break for breakfast, he headed out to the Yashiharou school. The route to Yashiharou school of Academics and Martial Arts consisted of 6 kilometers where there was many acres of farmland and small village homes. As Yami walked towards school, he thought *‘maybe, I should go talk with Apollo’*; therefore, he headed down to the Ata homestead, once he arrived there, he knocked on the door where Hikari answered the door; “who is it?” “Apollo’s friend, Yami” he responded. “Sure, wait here, Apollo is heading downstairs,” Yami saw Apollo heading downstairs, he knocked over a frame off the wall and as he went to put it back, Hikari hit him on the back and told him “Get a move on slowpoke. Don’t be wasting time” Apollo grunted and adhered to his brother’s charagin. Yami and Apollo then left the house and continued towards the school. As they hit the midway point Apollo

asked “Do you have a bicycle?” “I do, but it's coming apart; I don't mind it too much since walking in the scenery allows me to observe a lot” answered Yami. “The reason I ask is because I recently got this fast bicycle and it's boring to compete against my brother all the time, my brother knows this mechanic not too far from here, who'd let one go for a good price if you want to check it out after school” told Apollo. Yami thought for a moment and replied, “alright, I'll check it out later.” They continued walking and made it to the school door, a teacher met them there, “Hurry up, you are going to be late!” he shouted. The duo went to their respective first class. In the afternoon, the time arrived for martial arts training; it was the first day of what is known as “Rank Week”, a day in which each student competed to get the highest rank in the school. Last year, Yami had made it high in the rankings for Scholarly skills and above average

on technique and physical ability. His brother had made it in the top five for both major categories; Yami was indifferent about his position for the most part, except maybe when someone who he interpreted as arrogant strode around; thinking he ruled the small rock they lived on. When these arrogant people failed at achieving what they said they would; his dark humor was tickled. Lately, the recent additions to the hierarchy had delightfully surprised him. Maeno Noriyori topped the rankings with his athletic abilities at the recent young adults athletic competitions; he wasn't the brightest, yet he wasn't an idiot; Yami liked Noriyori's quick wit when it came to dodging the higher ups so that they couldn't convince each other to take down his shenanigans. There was also a student named Suda Ryoza, who had recently published a novel about an economic analysis of steam projects in the country and how to save companies money

for maintenance costs among other variables. This publication had given him a lot of praise from the community and on the notice for top higher education institutions. Yami thought, ‘*I wonder why he puts up with writing about what he wants to rather than what he wants to write*’ he paused, Yami thought about the silliness of validating paper as some sort of major utility it seemed because of its unreliable production that it would be a major problem in the future but he also considered the gullibility of the average person is; he definitely could see the appeal to it to the common man. Yami turned his attention towards a crowd of students entering the building; among the regulars included a few fresh faces. He noticed a rather tall person who looked to be around his age, he had long blonde hair and had features that the local girls all spoke about. Yami overheard this man’s conversation, he was from overseas and was an Amateur in

Boxing; he had an attitude of superiority where he spoke of his exploits, this attitude had piqued his interest as he wanted to test the guy out to see if he would put up or shut up when it came to the competition matches. Apollo tapped on Yami's shoulder as he was watching the scene, at first it had spooked him slightly because he was thinking about many things at once and was in his mental zone, a place where very few things could break his intense concentration. "What do you think of the foreigner Yami" whispered Apollo, "he doesn't look like a pushover, but we will see how things turn out"; Yami and Apollo went to take their seats in the arena and listened to the commencement of the events. The principal introduced himself and stated "Welcome to the 50th annual Rank Week!, Over the course of the week, your mind and will power will be put to the test to see who grab glory and those who will be left in the dust." The

crowd roared in cheer; the school was known for its hardship placed on the high achievers, so when it came down to competition and free expression of talent and knowledge; it became a well received duty that the students could relieve the stress of the daily grind. The principle resumed in his speech “today I’d like to introduce a few new students that will be studying here; I’m pleased to introduce first “Jack Genshu” Yami began a thought of “So, this is mr. Pretty boy, huh?, well. I’ll see if he lives up to his name”, the principal went on “Next, we have another student from the North Seas; give a hand to Hif Krash!” Hif Krash took to the podium, he was slightly taller than average, but had a disposition that gave him an aura of someone who was very good at hiding secrets and probably would do anything to protect those interests. Hif Krash began walking off the stage; he thought “What a pain in the ass, I am only doing this for

HeadQuarters sake, I'll get back at them somehow". Next came "Tominaga Iho!" a short girl emerged from the back area. Iho had dark red hair with gold eyes but with a tint of green in them as if to showcase emeralds. From her body posture and introduction, she came across as someone who was quiet, but knew a good deal of knowledge from a book addiction. As the introductions wrapped up to a close, a few administrators brought out a large board containing the names of students; "Today we'll have drawings, of which either you will compete with your mind or your strength" announced the Principle. He began to draw out names and positions, finally it was time for the duo's turn. Apollo pulled in the strength Category and won the luck of the draw; he would be facing Jack Genshu in the first round; the fifth fight of the tournament. In the rulebook; the only rules were that you couldn't kill your opponent or severely

maim them; yet anything else was fair game in these fights. There was a pride in the institution that although the students were allowed to bring weapons in; it was very rare to see them being utilized because of the potential social backlash that would be thrust on them for their heretical behavior. As Yami waited for his name to be drawn; his brother Genso stopped by and grabbed his arm to bring him out of the area, “What the hell is your problem Genso?” Yami stated annoyed. Genso looked at him and then around to his surroundings “Listen, you are going to think I am crazy; however, I overheard and witnessed some disturbing things today” “Well just say it” Yami replied. “I overheard some of the officials, speaking about a massive policy change in the Council coming soon, and this may very well affect you and I, among others,” “The Council? Yami questioned “Aren’t those guys some washed-up old people who happen to have

business dealings in Yashiharu and maybe at best a good lobbying mechanism?” Genso replied “I didn’t see them as very significant in our area, but there have been foreign shipments to the docks recently with their name plastered all over it; not only that with the rising tensions around the area over new laws and fundamental changes to people’s daily lives; this would be a good opportunity for a rogue organization to make a grasp for more power.” “I guess, nonetheless these thoughts of yours Genso make me look like the logical one and considering my recent dreams that is saying a lot” Yami stated. “You are probably right; but I did want to bring the issue to your attention Yami; after all you have a good mind whether you like to admit it or not” declared Genso. “Ya ya “ Genso replied. Genso and Yami both returned to the arena; Apollo walked up to both of them, “Hello Genso, What’s up!” Same old replied Genso, “Same old?,

aren't you working for some big shot in a laboratory? Questioned Apollo "Dr. Kaufspalding is a wise man for his age; I couldn't asked for a better mentor" Genso stated half serious and half joking. "Yami your pull is for Strength first and you will be fighting Suda Ryoza, Good luck" disclosed Apollo. "The guy is a writer, I'm not too worried" spoke Yami. The first few matches went by with relatively little excitement to speak of; the matches were mid tier and although somewhat fast; Yami was looking forward to see Apollo fight Jack. "Let see what you got in you Apollo" stated Yami The announcer entered the arena, "Now we will begin the 5th Fight, Jack Genshu vs Apollo Ata; on your mark... Begin"

Jack emerged from his corner and took up an adroit boxing style; swinging his arm in anticipation for a pummel. He took the first move and slammed Apollo in the face with a left jab, then went for a step in where he slammed Apollo

in the cheek twice with his right straight. Apollo stepped back, Jack rushed him and grabbed his arm and flipped Apollo over his shoulders, he landed on his face. Yami could tell that Apollo was getting angry by the stern look on his face. Jack approached forward for a left jab towards Apollo's chest; however, Apollo grabbed his hand and then jumped up using Jack's arm as a beam, and while still in the air, grabbed him by the neck while behind him and used his body weight to slam Jack Genshu on the ground. Apollo then grabbed Jack's leg and showing off Jiu-jitsu, twisted his body into a lock; this led to a stalemate that lasted for 30 seconds until Jack elbowed Apollo and broke free; he ran up to Apollo and grabbed the back of his head and slammed it on his knee staggering Apollo then Jack went for a liver blow and got a few clean shots on him. Apollo at this point was clearly exhausted despite this; Apollo had a fighting

spirit in his eyes; he decided to change his tactics, he would go toe to toe with the Jack. Apollo squared up in a standard position; however, as he aimed his punches; he had a remarkable swift step and shot his left square into Jack's face; he began routing him for the time being and swept him off his feet and jumped on him for 10 seconds getting in some hits; Jack kicked him off and then changed his style to more compact and then hit Apollo in the face with a very rapid punch and that was it; Apollo was unconscious. The crowd began cheering for Jack; yet some were congratulating Apollo for his courageous fight . Genso thought "that fight was sure something." Hif Krash looked into the arena with a strong interest;

'How promising'

Chapter 3: Reaction

Apollo was taken from the arena to the infirmary on a stretcher. A few minutes after the 6th round began, Genso spoke to Yami, “Apollo will be alright, I’ll go check on him in a little bit, When are you fighting Ryoza? It looks like I will fight him in the 10th round, it will give me some time to prepare some strategies” states Yami. “By his style, What do you think of your other future opponent Jack? Asked Genso “The guy has strength and some technique when it comes to fighting ;however, I think he is lacking when it comes to combat strategy, strength is a component of a battle but it isn’t the end all” answered Yami. “That’s a respectable analysis; yet, you must prove yourself to be a superior fighter in the arena to back up your claims of course” stated Genso. “I’ll give him a run for his money, hopefully the fight will be in the second round;however, as the rounds, thin out; it will

almost be a guarantee fight according to statistics.” Genso looked amazed at his brother’s foresight, “Yes, Unfortunately for me, I pulled in the other category so it will be a game of wits for me. It is, as they say, Patience is a virtue for the wise”. As the rounds continued forward; the new students were chatting among themselves meanwhile Hif Krash excused himself out of the social cliché; “Hello?”, a strange man answered on the other end of the line. “See anything worthwhile?” Hif Krash replied “There are some candidates who may be worthy of further investigation;although there are a few that have not gone,who may very well make this whole ordeal worthwhile in all categories.” “Good, We are expecting concrete results agent”, “I understand. Sir” stated Hif Krash. He began walking back towards the arena, while he was speaking, there was a figure hiding in the shadows eavesdropping on the conversation. A

smug face appeared outwards, “it looks like these are turning into interesting times” and returned to the Arena. The announced stood up and rose to the podium “Attention, Now we will begin the 10th bout of today, Yami Tenshi vs Suda Ryozo, Take your mark, Begin!” Yami and Suda both took fighting stances, Yami began the assault with a right straight, Ryozo dodged and struck Yami in the side of the head, Yami brushed past and hit Ryozo with a barrage of chest blows. To Yami’s surprise Ryozo was taking the hits like a professional, “all right!, you are a tough bastard for a writer” Ryozo smirked “Everyone has their hidden talents,” he stated. Ryozo stepped in towards Yami, and placed his leg inside of Yami’s stance and pushed Yami that he fell on his back and he began kicking Yami as he blocked his face, during a brief moment Ryozo kicked a final time and Yami was able to recover and as he was getting up, he grabbed Ryozo’s foot and spun him,

as he was falling, Yami gave him a hook and put his weight behind the wallop. Ryoza laid there on his back dazed; a few moments later he gained his senses and got up. Ryoza then took the initiative with a charge towards his opponent, weaving by the punches and tackled Yami to the ground. As Ryoza tried to land some punches, Yami placed his leg into Ryoza's chest and flipped him to the other side of him. Yami suddenly grabbed Ryoza's leg and began locking the hamstring, Ryoza tried the best he could to escape, but in the end wasn't able to break free and thus conceded defeat. The judge ran over to the contestants and declared Yami the winner. After the celebration, Yami stepped down from the stage and headed back to his group; Genso was waiting to congratulate him on his performance, "I think you did just fine", "I appreciate it " stated Yami while he brushed off his shoulder. "Well, I am going to talk with

Apollo, want to come with me? asked Genso, “I am going to go to Tofu’s shop to look at a bicycle” Yami replied. “That’s fine, see you later,” said Genso. Yami began his walk towards the shop, on his way he noticed someone walking, he squinted his eyes to see more clearly, Yami’s eyes saw a girl named Eis Hiroshi, *‘hm, I don’t know her that well but my brother has talked about her before, maybe I should say hello’* Yami began to jog over to her trail, as he got closer, she began to act startled, “I don’t know what you want, but I don’t have it” Eis said in a scared tone, “It’s alright, I’m a friend” Yami replied, “ I am Genso’s younger brother, Yami; I am not surprised you didn’t recognize me considering we’ve haven’t had many chances to talk before.” The tenseness of Eis’s aura began to calm down as she heard his words; “Genso’s brother huh.... You do have some resemblance I guess”, “so what are you up to? “ Eis asked “ well, my friend Apollo mentioned a

cheap bike at this guy's shop so I am heading there, I needed a replacement for my old one and I am doing decent at the trials so I thought I would reward my efforts". "Not a bad idea, I tried to go bicycling with Genso a few times, but his girlfriend Suki is rather jealous so she kept getting in the way" Eis told while lowering her voice. " I think she means well overall, she's just overcaution, she probably has had family issues so she doesn't want to lose someone stable in her life," said Yami. "You are probably right," Yami noticed Eis grabbed her arm, by the way she had been acting so far, he could tell that she had some sort of affection towards his brother, because of that he felt at ease when talking with her. "Want to come to the bicycle shop with me?, that is if you don't have much else to do" said Yami. "I do have some things to do, but they aren't that important, a good time is better than errands anyways, Eis smiled Yami began getting slightly

red in the face “yeah.. Sure, that would be cool”
Yami stated. The duo began to walk once again.

In the courtyard of Tofu’s shop.

Yami and Eis approach Tofu’s shop, in the window they could see a man of medium build with an average height standing next to the window, he was using a telephone to call someone, Yami began to knock on the door “Yes, come in,” announced Tofu, Yami and Eis enter the shop through the staircase, “now, who may you be? asked Tofu while sticking out his hand, “My name is Yami and this is Eis” “Hello” Eis said in a shy manner. “Oh, Yami... Your friend Apollo told me some basic information about you and how you were looking into a bicycle, we have a wide selection of bikes including: Fujis, Kuwaharas and Miyatas... and if you have a good of extra money , we also have in the store’s inventory some foreign bikes like Schwinn” stated Tofu. “I am looking for a simple dirt

bicycle that is fast and can withstand sleek movements “ Yami said in an uncharacteristic Confident tone. “In that case, you’d probably want a Fuji, it’s doing well in the recent races” stated Tofu, following the statement, “Be careful being too daring, it might cause some unintentional injuries” Tofu said in a serious tone, he began to roll up his sleeve to show a long scar that traveled across his forearm Eis and Yami both looked slightly off put by it, but Yami replied sharply “Well, if I mess up, it’s on me, I am not scared of this world and what it has to offer” Tofu began to loosen up his attitude “Not bad, you got guts, I like it”, “Oh yeah, that reminds me, I asked Apollo to go run an errand for me, I promised I’d buy him dinner soon if he did and well, he likes to eat a lot so he was more than happy to oblige” “ sounds about right”, Yami laughed. Tofu began looking out the window Yami began to notice subtle hints that something

was going on in Tofu's mind, he had only just met him, but his sense was giving that impression to him, later on Yami would find out how right he was.

Yami had picked out the Fuji bicycle to try out, the handling was good and the bike had good bones to it Yami thought "I'll take it, with the condition that I can pay some of the payment Yami stated" "I don't usually let people do that; however, I have a personal reason for letting you slide on this, the money has been good lately, so it won't be a big deal to be paid in increments, but I hope you don't betray my trust" "I certainly won't, I try to be a man of my words Yami stated. During this time, Eis was in the background looking at the different items in the shop, he had all sorts of different and exotic gadgets here, "who is this Tofu guy really?, she began to ponder. After the conversation ended with Yami, Tofu called over to Eis "Hi there, I won't bite, I

promise” spoke Tofu, Eis looked embarrassed, “I am not shy, really.. It's just I was looking around at your wares and I thought they were interesting so I got distracted I guess” said Eis. “I am just playing around,” Tofu began to look over Eis, “*That’s creepy*” thought Eis, Tofu put his hand on Yami’s shoulder, “that’s quite a girlfriend you got there, you sligh dog”, “wait a minute!, we are just friends, we just began to talk not that long ago” Yami said, shocked “No need to deny it, You call it whatever you want” Yami began ignoring him. “Alright, I guess we should head out,” states Yami, “Apollo should be stopping by soon, why not ride around on some different bicycles, I’ll let your friend borrow one of my bicycles so you can ride around to waste some time” Eis approached closer “Really? that’s very kind, that sounds great” stated Eis “No problem, it’s what friends are for” Yami and Eis both took a bicycle outside and began riding around as time passed.

On the other side of Yashiharou

A car stopped in front of a large building, it was surrounded by many similar structures; however, the main building was clearly the highest in the landscape; a voice from the car began “These council people sure know how to present an image of grandeur don’t they? “ in response, a voice from the front seat emerged “Come on, we don’t have time to be wasting here” stated the man. A group of men emerged from the car and headed into the building, a secretary was working at the front desk on paperwork, one of the members approached the counter, she looked up at him and began “Excuse me.. are you Ash Kroft?” questioned the secretary, “Yes, I am here for a meeting with the Council members” stated Ash Kroft. “Certainly, right this way, the women lead Ash Kroft followed by 2 members of the organization to the meeting room. She opened the boardroom doors and there, sitting at

a large table were senior members of the council, one of the members began speaking “Thank you for your help miss, you are now excused”, the secretary turned around and began walking out of the room ‘*at least you could learn my name*’ she spoke under her breath,” “Ah yes, sit down, would you like a drink Mr. Kroft?” “No, thanks, it’s not my style to drink on the job” “That’s all well and good”, “first let me introduce myself, My name is Ringo Kane and I am the deputy director of the council, you may call me Mr. Kane”, “Yes sir, it’s a pleasure” replied Ash Kroft, Kane continued with “the 2 members to my right are Kasumi Masato, and Umi Ronin. Kasumi began with “It’s nice to meet you; sir, We hope both of our groups can benefit from our arrangement” Umi followed with “We will be consulting you on part of the operation in order to have greater success” Ash Kroft listening to this began thinking ‘*These guys don’t beat around the bush, I*

should be careful about my actions' Ringo Kane began once again "The operation today is a highly classified mission and thus this room has been swept for any possible intrusions that may ensue. We shall now review the details of the operation, Umi Ronin pulled out a map and placed it on the table, Ringo Kane continued, "We need you to infiltrate Yashiharou plaza at 16:00 tomorrow evening and be inside the Sentinel building next to the Times Bank, on the second floor in the 102nd room, there will be a rifle that holds 7.62 ammo, you will wait for the signal from approximately 800 meters away, once the signal goes off, you are to take the shot, multiple if necessary to take down the target. The target's identity is Arata Unmei, he is the mayor of this municipality, if he is eliminated then; the council can grasp further control of the area and thus set off a chain of events to gain control of the entirety of these lands", "Pardon, my skepticism,

but how am I supposed to escape without getting caught? and what kind of compensation are we dealing with for such a dangerous act” Ash Kroft raised. Ringo Kane looked annoyed by the question, but he answered, “You and your organization will receive a lump sum for this action and future contracts for military operations once we seize control of more territory, that is assuming that your side holds up the deal” “You’ve put me in a bit of a bind here, if I choose to decline your offer for this job, then I will not make it through the night, though if I am caught for assassinating this man, I will be hung in the streets in short order, in all likelihood I will have a 30 percent chance of success if I’ve thought this through” stated Ash Kroft Ringo Kane began looking at his colleagues and began laughing “my my.. You seem to possess a healthy sense of cynicism, I can appreciate that;however, this is a gambit that the council feels necessary to

take due to circumstances which will not be discussed here, think about it this way, sometimes you have to go all in to win the grand prize, I hope you understand” said Ringo, “I understand plenty” stated Ash Kroft, then he then left the boardroom with a heavy burden on resting on his shoulders.

The next day, Apollo’s house

“Hey Hikari, it's time to wake up!” Apollo shouted to Hikari when he was sleeping in bed. Hikari woke up suddenly, “what’s the matter, give me 5 more minutes,” “We need to go grocery shopping in town today remember?” said Apollo “Yes, you are right, let me get dressed and then we will head out,” stated Hikari, Hikari began getting ready for his errands, soon he put on his shoes and headed out the door with Apollo. Apollo and Hikari began their journey to the

town, it was a few kilometer walk, along the way the two brothers talked about various topics until they reached their point to split off “I am going to head to market,” said Hikari, “I’ll head to the junkyard to look for parts for Tofu, maybe I’ll find something good to sell to him,” stated Apollo. “Alright, see you soon” stated Hikari “Yes” replied Apollo. Simultaneously, Ash Kroft, was walking in a parallel street to his marked position, he looked at his watch, the time was 14:00 hours; he began speaking under his breath to himself “I showed up early, I might as well enjoy this smoke, it may be the last one I have for a while” he pulled out a cigarette from his coat and began enjoying the nicotine. Ash Kroft began to think about the past *‘maybe, I’ll be in contact with Eva again, she was a pain in the ass sometimes , but she was nice and easy on the eyes, if this works out, maybe I’ll convince her to get a place somewhere where it’s hot and sunny’* thought Ash Kroft. While Ash

Kroft was making preparations, Hikari was searching for different material for Dr. Kaufspalding's lab since the eccentric professor had given him an extensive list; as he had looked at the different items, he scratched his head because a majority of items were objects that he had seldom seen before, much less had bought. Hikari looked towards a vendor stall and saw a poster for a community gathering for the mayor Arata Unmei regarding future funding discussions; "I should check this out since I am in town, there may be important information regarding the Steam technology sector " Hikari pondered. Hikari proceeded to collect more items on the list over the course of an hour and a half, finally when he had finished. *'Time to gather for the town meeting'* he thought. Hikari went Yashiharou Plaza adjacent to Times Bank and took his seat in one of the chairs set up for the speech. During the intermedium, Arata Unmei

was conversing with his fellow colleagues around seminar topics which they seemed to have crafted vicariously as, if not to reveal too much personal detail yet be satisfactory to the people as to gain their favor. Arata Unmei in a short while took the stage and began his fateful speech. “Welcome Ladies and Gentlemen, today I shall discuss proposals about which aspects of the economy will be the focus of our near-term funding and direction for the following few years” he cleared his throat and then continued. “Over the last 25 years, our nation has been rebuilding from the great war; a war in which conflicting egos took precedence over the people’s daily reality, and thus many were lost in that eerie conflict; yet our new building process with the help of steam technology has allowed us to rise from the depths of the maelstrom and to bear fruit in this new age; an age in which technology has made each and every one of our

lives more pleasurable. Due to this, I propose that additional spending be allocated towards research and development of this vital technology; with all great innovation there does come a cost; a cost that will be paid for in the future by great yields as new jobs are created for our people to become a greater man or women.” the crowd began applauding as they were Ash Kroft was preparing his to take the shot, a sudden wind gust began turning up to the plaza to which the people began taking cover from the siege.

Arama Unmei began sheltering his face from the wind and began discussing with his contemporaries, whether or not to stop his speech. In the end, he decided to continue. Ash Kroft decided to continue with his target in sight; with the wind brewing; it seemed as if it may take a few shots to kill the man, but Ash Kraft thought that the job was important enough to make adjustments, he hadn't seen the signal yet; so he

decided to change his plans; first he traveled down each successive step in order to get closer to the stage; he managed his way through the crowd with his firearm ready for action and made it to the backstage; Unmei had just finished his speech and his crew was packing up their equipment; with a lack of personnel next to the politician, Ash Kroft got directly behind him with the curtain preceding the podium, pulled out his pistol and shot at Unmei. Unmei began coughing up blood from his gunshot wounds; he was hit 3 times in the back; Unmei slowly collapsed into the stage and slowly crawled towards behind the curtains; the wounds did not hit any vital spots directly; yet the loss of blood was nearing Arata Unmei closer to his death; as the commotion was transpiring; Hikari ran to the stage looking for the injured man; he moved the curtains and saw a masked Ash Kraft moving fast from the area. Hikari began to chase him, the pursuit lasted for

a few kilometers; as Hikari gained ground, in the chase, he leaned inwards and tackled Ash Kroft from behind. When Ash Kroft hit the ground, he quickly rolled to his left and stood up, he looked at Hikari and began with “This is very unfortunate, I planned on only taking out one person today; however, you’ve clearly decided to get involved; sorry about this, but I’m going to show no mercy”, Ash Kroft took to his fighting stance and charged at Hikari with his hands feinting a high blow and instead went low and gave Hikari a powerful right straight into his stomach; Hikari gasped for air, in response he lowered his head and Ash Kroft gave him a sharp uppercut to his jaw. Hikari fell back, but withstood the damage, seeing this Ash Kroft taunted “You were able to take a couple blows; not bad at all” Hikari replied “Let’s continue”, this time Hikari approached and stepped in with steep jabs. Ash Kroft blocked the hits and tried to

counter whereas Hikari weaved around his fists, moving at a good tempo he tried to land shots when suddenly, Ash Kroft threw a long left straight where Hikari was able to slide along his inner arm, throwing a clothesline blow knocking Ash Kroft on his back; Ash Kroft put up his arms to defend against Hikari, who was now on top of him punching him, Ash Kroft spoke under his breath “This bastard is tough” and he lifted his leg and kicked Hikari with his boot; Hikari stumbled forward in pain; in response, he clenched his teeth to endure the feeling; Ash Kroft stood up and brushed his knees, at his boot toe was a knife sticking out at the bottom. “This is a game of life or death, I can’t fight completely fair unfortunately” he stated. Ash Kroft pulled out a combat knife and pointed it towards Hikari “Listen, I will let you leave, but this is your only opportunity; even if I let you live no one will take you seriously without solid evidence, you got a

long life kid;don't forsake yourself" Hikari took a moment to think about what he said, but decided "Most people would let this event go, but I wouldn't feel good about letting this slide, I take my own life as my responsibility so If I die fighting you then that's what it is" Hikari stated determined. In a cold voice, Ash Kroft replied "so be it". Ash Kroft took a stance with his knife in the dominant hand. In accordance, Hikari began spacing himself and looked for possible weapons, *how can I win this when this man wields this weapon?, stay calm... that's your only chance,* along the path there was a wooden fence lining the acres of the local farmer's land; good fortune had led to some of the fence being rotten around old rusty nails, Hikari noticed the degradation and thought *maybe I can grab a '2 by 4' and use it as a weapon,* he quickly reached for the fence and yanked hard to release a board that had a nail jutting out of the end. Noticing this, Ash

Kroft responded, “Good luck hitting me with that,” he approached and charged forward, trying to slash Hikari, in response, Hikari dodges the swipes and responses by swinging his lumber at Ash Kroft; they both miss. This time, Hikari approaches Ash Kroft with a side swing, Ash Kroft dodged, in response, Hikari kneed him in the head; Ash Kroft stumbled backwards, then Hikari took the lumber and slams it down viciously into Ash Kroft’s left latissimus dorsi, piercing the flesh with the nail; Ash Kroft now laid on the ground, pretending as if he were knocked out. In accordance, Hikari leaned over to try to subdue him when Ash Kroft jolted up and stabbed Hikari in the right quadricep as he juttet upward, in excruciating agony Hikari keels over in pain. Ash Kroft now standing in authority began stating “Too bad, You let your guard down and this was the result, more importantly, you now have to worry about them” Hikari didn’t

understand his statement and glanced up in the distance, he could now hear the sirens in the distance coming towards them, Ash Kroft proceeded to run towards the nearby brush in order to find a way to escape to the evacuation point. Once there, Ash Kroft began assessing his wound in his back, *It feels painful but as long as I get help soon, i'll be fine...* he pulled out his communication device and called the number given by Umi Ronin, "The job is done, I've held up my end of the deal, I need help for my injury", a voice that Ash Kroft hadn't heard before responded "I have heard on the radio of your successful mission, we will be at the rendezvous point in five minutes" Meanwhile, Hikari laid there trying to cover up his wound, *I'll be damned if I die here*, shortly the police came and began investigating the scene, Hikari could hear an officer overhead "We found him sir, time to take him in", they approached him slowly, "take me

in, you do mean to the hospital right?” asked Hikari to the officer, in response, “Yes, medical professionals will tend to you, but after that you will face justice for what you have done” stated the officer stern. “What I’ve done?” asked Hikari. Hikari didn’t receive a response from the officer, Hikari was lifted on stretched into the police vehicle, on the way, he overheard a broadcast of news that stated a suspect had been apprehended by Yashiharou Police, *‘I’m glad they got him, who knows what he would have done next’* thought Hikari. Soon after, he was transferred to Yashiharou Medical Center; in order to receive medical care for his wounds, as he was recovering, men in dark suits approached his bedside. “We at the justice department of Yashiharou are here to read the accused the charges against you, the defended for murder of Arata Unmei “ stated one of the men. “Murder?, I am innocent, where is the real culprit, he should

be in your custody” stated Hikari, “According to reports, you were seen at the crime scene approaching Mr. Unmei on the stage in Yashiharou Plaza, in accordance you are the prime suspect for his murder”. “So... I guess he didn’t survive after all... I guess that is to be expected given his injuries” Hikari thought, “Your trial will begin once your injuries recover, in the name of justice, you will be given a fair and expedient trial to determine whether you are guilty or not” stated the officer. After his statements, the men left the room to allow the doctors to continue to work on Hikari Ata, *‘I will face my trial with dignity to prove that I am innocent’* thought Hikari, as he began to drift to much needed sleep.

Chapter 4:

Evidence

Early in the morning, Apollo woke up, hit his alarm clock and headed towards the radio and turned the dial to channel 6 on ,and he began hearing the morning broadcast as he was preparing for the day, a new voice emerged,“We begin our broadcast today with a breaking story, in regards to the recent attack in *Yashiharou Plaza* of our Mayor Arata Unmei, we regret to inform the viewer that he has succumbed to his injuries caused by multiple gunshot wounds; Mr. Unmei recently celebrated his 50th birthday, he has a lasting legacy in our area’s development and its path towards industrialization; in response to this tragedy investigators have begun searching the crime scene for evidence that shall be used in a court of law to bring justice to our city; moreover, there is a suspect in custody,which investigators have been able to trace near the crime scene, due to the developing nature of the investigation; the authorities have

stayed silent about the identity of the individual and his current location, as we gather more information we will keep the viewer posted. This is Jay Okyobou reporting from Yashiharou radio signing out.” after the broadcast ended, Apollo scratched his head wondering *‘Where did Hikari go? I didn’t see him return last night, I’ll have to check with dad to see what’s going on,’* Apollo descended the stairs when he noticed his father Helios standing near the door speaking with men he hadn't seen that often, *‘Are those Police officers? Why are they here?’* as he approached closer, he could hear the aggravation coming from his father’s voice, “How dare you accuse my son, after all I’ve done for this country! You dare claim my son is a murderer!” spoke Helios at the top of his lungs, “Sir, please calm down, We are here to inform you that your son is under current investigation for the recent incident in our city, We are not condoning his guilt nor are we ruling

out his involvement in this manner, please take this information about the upcoming trial, the honorable Ichimonji Inbo will proceed over the trial coming in two weeks time,” stated officer Tetsu, “Two weeks, *bah!* If there is any righteousness in this world, then the truth will be revealed” stated Helios. “I concur with your sentiment, I’ll take my leave now,” replied Officer Tetsu, Tetsu and his 2 comrades left the Ata residence and the officers entered their vehicles and accelerated in the opposite direction towards the police station in the business district in a hurry. Once the tension left Helios’s shoulders, Helios looked behind him and noticed his son standing in the corner of the room in total disbelief of what he had just witnessed, Helios then approached Apollo and put his hand on Apollo’s shoulder and stated “Don’t worry my son, your brother and I will fight this and eventually his innocence will be proven, in the

meantime, we'll gather what information we can, I'll send word to a friend of mine to help out", Helios proceeded to begin dial a number in the telephone during which Apollo walked over to the door with determination, he opened it and stepped out into a cold world.

On the opposite side of the Korean Strait,

In the harsh fog a Tupolev Tu-104 descended on a rural run-way north of Dongma-eul, a medium sized village in the nation of Vulbaek, once they landed a stairway emerged from the plane, emerging out its large doors was deputy director of the council Ringo Kane, he emerged from the cabin door and began his descent, following him was his fellowship; according to the procedures, they proceeded to inform the motherland to report the status of their arrival. Once the members approached the prepared automobile in waiting,

they were approached by a local chieftom
named Foux Hóu “Welcome my friends, how are
you today?” asked Foux, “sufficient, I suppose”
Ringo Kane responded in a neutral tone of voice,
“I would like to see the status report on our
project,” he stated “oh yes, that is going along as
planned..., the mineral extraction is working as
planned ;however, before that, my reward is due
just about now, wouldn’t you say?” Foux
questioned, “hold your tongue, the council
upholds its arrangements and will provide all
requirements and maybe even more when the
time comes.” stated Ringo. “Of course, mind my
prodding into the matter, shall we go?” asked
Foux. “Certainly” replied Ringo. The machines
hurriedly traveled to the encampment, the site
contained many mining platforms under the
protection of guards, the area was kept from the
eyes of the locals and was simply referred to as
Site 4, in the area were amethyst, jadeite, and

iron ore being taken to be processed for industrial use and trade, on the surface, it was seen by the public as being a profitable business with an aura of mystery being operated by an international company; this is what the Council had intended so that; it could conduct their true operational intentions. As the group emerged outside in front of the corollary support buildings, Ringo Kane and Kasumi Masuto separated from the other members in order to speak to the manager of the subsidiary, *Teiden*. Teiden led the pair into his office and shut the door behind them, Teiden began with “Congratulations on the good work, Star and Shiloh are very pleased with your efforts, with this political maneuvering of yours, your Council is in a good position to assert it right to increase its control of the Japanese people, people will clamor to security while at the same time push to give up their essential liberties in order to feel

safe in their environment. Arata Unmei was simply a pawn in our chessboard” stated Teiden, “Now onto the subject at hand, in our operations, we haven’t been able to locate any more of Peng Kane’s clues towards the chest, his descendants have been extensively interrogated and proceeded to be tortured to lead us to Dongma-eul so the sisters of the realm have determined another plan of action”, “Now, what could that be?” questioned Ringo Kane, “That young man who came in contact with our agent during the recent assassination, the elders think he may be useful to our cause” mentioned Teiden. “In which way exactly?” Ringo asked with some hesitation, “from the reports, it mentioned that Ash Kroft had been followed by this young man, because of his actions, he is on trial for the mayor’s assassination;therefore, he will want to find justice and track down the real killer, along those lines Shiloh has predicted that he will be

able to escape our holding with help and make a grand escape, afterwards, with the manhunt unable to find him, his friends will at some point try to track him down, what is interesting is that his brother is friends with Yami Tenshi, the son of Kurai Tenshi.” stated Teiden “Kurai Tenshi, the ace of Yashiharou, What is so significant about that?” Ringo questioned bewildered, “Kurai’s wife Artesia Valentine was a close friend of Peng Kane and she possesses quite significant neural enlightenment based on the report analysis, her son Yami has made contact with Star and Shiloh and they have determined a great potential from him, maybe even a potential that if brought out would lead us to what we want,” exclaimed Teiden. “I’m very skeptical about this proposition;however, the idea is absurd enough that it could make sense if given the right conditions” stated Ringo Kane. Kasumi stood up, and began with “How, exactly, are we to push

Yami into his potential?” “the plan will require some sacrifice now; yet it will pay off in the future”, “Please proceed with the agenda” the duo replied.

In the Yashiharou plaza,

The pretrial for the Hikari Ata trial began, Hikari Ata entered the meeting room and meets his attorney for the first time. “Please have a seat” motioned the attorney, “My name is Nic Hiroshi, I will be representing you in your upcoming defense”, “I see, thank you for your service” Hikari took a bow, and sat down at the table. Nic continued with “Let us begin with the first piece of evidence that the prosecution will put forward, it seems to be that there were witnesses who claim you approached Arata Unmei’s platform within the time span of 5 to 10 seconds after the gunshots sounded off, the witnesses claim you were carrying multiple items with you”, “Yes, I was collecting supplies for Dr.

Kaufspalding because he had asked me to last time he visited our home to speak with my father, I was volunteered by my father to help despite my hesitation.” Hikari looked away with a cold expression, “We will be able to prove that by collecting testimony for the local shopkeepers, so that piece of evidence will be little of use to the prosecution, next up is the matter of the murder weapon, here is where I think we will have the first of the difficulties to prove your innocence, there was a firearm found to be at the scene of the crime that had fingerprints on it.” stated Nic Hiroshi. “Fingerprints?, those can be anyone's prints, how is that going to be used?” questioned Hikari, “for one thing, I don’t trust the prosecution to be perfectly honest with their findings, the prosecution is headed by Kasumi Masato, who is a representative from the council, there are suspicions that she has ties to Enryo Sora, an insider group that may be involved

because they could have benefited from the demise of Arata Unmei,” stated Nic, “That assertion sounds very out there for normal people to wrap their heads around;but yet,because of the circumstances, I think anything is a possibility in this world of ours” told Hikari. “Mrs. Masato may well try to convince the jury that your fingerprints and the unknown fingerprints on a gun match up using evidence manipulation techniques” Nic suspected “It is a dubious idea, but if there are underlying intentions here, then that angle may be used to try to get me to take the blame for the incident.” Hikari declared “In order to counter this, we need to begin a search on our own to find another weapon at the scene of the crime, if we can provide a solid counter example, then the evidence would be canceled out in the decision making, this would eliminate two initial threats to your freedom” Nic exhibited, “What initial

action should be taken?” asked Hikari, “you are in luck, your father has a friend that will be of tremendous help for our case, his name is Tofu”, “Tofu, the mechanic? What can he do to help us in this manner?” questioned Hikari, “I’ve been told that Tofu doesn’t only run a bicycle shop, he also has the skills of a master repairman;therefore, he does a lot of normal maintenance for business owners in Yashiharou plaza;due to this, his clients leave him with spare keys to many doors and passages into structures that may be of interest, it’s quite extraordinary, that one man has such a wide array of access to so many places in our area” exclaimed Nic Hiroshi, “Where should the search start with though?, I didn’t notice anyone suspicious as I was approaching the speech platform” mentioned Hikari, “When I learned of my representation of the case, I asked around the plaza and discovered that someone had noticed a

strange man carrying a long case with him walking on Yubinidoro Road, I think the search group should check the buildings nearby, it would be reasonable to exclude the Times Bank from the search since the security would be strong there, therefore the only buildings that stood out as potential sites would be the Sentinel building and the Cathedral; because of this, your father has organized some people to begin searching the area with Tofu for evidence that will help out with our defense case in the meantime, stay strong my friend”, Nic approached Hikari and patted him on his shoulder; “I will return tomorrow to consult you with the results of the search” Nic told and left the room, afterwards the guards came and collected Hikari to drag him back to the dungeon of despair, at the midway point Hikari looked down and thought aloud *must think this through, gotta have faith in everyone*

At Yashiharou Plaza

In the Yashiharou Plaza there was a cold disposition in its dwellers, the weather had been raining for almost 3 hours, Helios Ata and his group had just arrived and went from each structure asking about the fateful day where tragedy had struck, “Excuse me, have you seen any strange packages around here?” asked Apollo, “Can’t say I have lad” stated the Yubinidoro merchant. Apollo maneuvered to each dweller and asked the preceding question and received the disappointing answer; after some time Apollo approached Yami and asked him, “Have you had any luck in our search?” “I have not, yet we haven’t made our thorough search in the places Nic Hiroshi told us about; we will stake or main search there” stated Yami, Apollo then proceeded to call the group to go check out Yubinidoro main street “First, I’ll check out the Cathedral” stated

Apollo, he and the group split off, Apollo approached the front door of the Cathedral, it was a large structure with a towering door that exhibited a vast amount of different colors, it had stood from the 19th century persecutions to last as a beacon of hope for the local Western population for peace and harmony in the world, Apollo proceeded to knock on the door, “Yes?, Who is there?” asked the monk, “My name is Apollo Ata, I would like to speak with your leader, please” requested Apollo “I’m sorry young man, we aren’t having a service at this this time; but please do return” stated the monk, “Wait!, this is about the recent upheaval, my friend is in trouble if we can’t help him” shouted Apollo, there was a momentary pause on the other side of the Cathedral door, “hold on for a time please” asked the monk, a few minutes later the monk opened the door to let Apollo in, “yes, come this way towards our bishops office” as the pair was

walking, Apollo began thinking *‘the inside of this place is very strange, I can’t say I’ve seen anything like this before, all these markers of a foreign religion’* they arrived at the bishop’s office, from his door he announced that Apollo should come in, the monk led him in and closed the door behind Apollo, “You look tense, please sit down” stated the Bishop, “ah yes”, Apollo started nervously and sat down in the chair in front of him, “my name is Claus von Reinhardt, what can I help you with my son? From what my follower has told me; you seem to be having a misfortune in your life, please do tell your story as under God I will do my best to advise you” declared the Bishop. “Well, there was the recent murder inside of the Yashiharou plaza of the politician Arata Unmei” stated Apollo, “Yes, I’m aware proceed”, “my brother is the accused in the case;however, I know 100 percent in my mind that he is not the one who is responsible for the

crime, so I've come to ask if you can help me with any information that could help our defense case" stated Apollo, "I see that you have a large burden on your shoulders, I'm not sure if it will be much help but I will call a meeting of the monks to ask them if they've seen anything out of the ordinary during that time" stated the Bishop, "Thank you very much" stated Apollo, The Bishop rose from his chair and approached the door, he called to the monk who had let Apollo in and told him to ring the bell to call the other monks.

As the group gathered, the bishop took to the podium and began with "Today, we have a visitor to our place of worship, a young man who is shouldering a great burden, a burden in which one of you may be able to guide us to a further truth under God, if you've witnessed anything out of the ordinary as of late, please come forward" stated Claus, after a few moments two of the monks approached the bishop and stated

“We may have saw something that wasn’t right”,
“anything.. even minor evidence will help” stated Apollo. “Well, I was washing the outside of our church bell when I noticed a glare coming from what I believed to be the Sentinel Building around 13:30; I thought it was weird, but after a few moments; I went back to work as I was very busy that day” stated the monk. “That seems substantial, tell me which floor did you happen to notice the glare coming from?” asked the Bishop, “It must have been on one of the middle floors as I remember it not being that high up; sorry I can’t be more specific” stated the monk, “No...no, this is a good lead to check out for our friend here” replied the Bishop. “Tell me what have you seen Jonathan?” speaking to the second, younger monk. “Well, after I heard the gunshots, I came closer for a better look at the plaza and noticed who I presume to be Hikari chasing a mysterious man in the distance, I didn’t get a clear look at

the man, but he appeared to be a foreigner and was on the tall side” stated Jonathan “I see, the evidence is proving to be pointing to a plot in which your brother got in the middle of Apollo, poor lad; anyways, in the meantime, are there others who are helping in your search?” asked Bishop Claus, “yes, my father and his friend Tofu are leading a search party in Yashiharou Plaza for any leads; do you have a phone that I may use” Apollo asked. “Of course, do call them” stated Claus. The two monks lead Apollo to the telephone and he relayed what he had found out about the day from his new contact and Tofu told the group. Yami approached the counter, “Excuse me.. Is there anyway, my group and I can conduct a search here, it's in regard to Arata Unmei’s recent death” the counterman replied, “Sorry, I can’t allow just anyone to conduct a search here, leave it to the police,” he stated Helios Ata overhead the conversation and

approached the counter, “Listen here, I will take this up the chain of command if you don’t let us through” Helios declared in a demanding tone.

“I’m getting paid regardless, here is my bosses number so that you can bring up the issue with him” he passed Helios the note, while this disagreement was occurring Tofu and Yami crept up the staircase without making a sound, “let’s check the second floor first” stated Tofu “sounds good” stated Yami. The duo approached each room carefully, “how are we going to get in these rooms? questioned Yami, in a proud tone Tofu replied “watch this old man pull a trick out of his hat,” he proceeded to pull out a lock picking set he had made with some pins and a screwdriver, and began opening the lock *click* it opened the locks with ease, this process was repeated many times until they arrived at the 102nd room, to their surprise this room was much different from the rest of the proceeding rooms; it had an

appearance of being used as recent as a few days ago, there were clothes and cigarette butts lying around; some of the furniture was showing evidence of being moved and there were strange marks next to the window, Tofu approached the window and took a look at a black powder residue that was left near the half open window, “This must be some sort of gunpowder; I think we’ve hit the gold here” mentioned Tofu to Yami; “Yes, if this is here, then whoever is the true killer must have not had enough time to clean up his tracks, let’s keep searching” said Yami They kept looking for any weapons inside the room but were unable to find anything close to a firearm, “damn.. We gotta find something” at this point Yami was beginning to lose his cool demeanor, “Use your head Yami, if you were a killer, what would you do with a weapon you might not be able to carry with you?” told Tofu “I would take it apart and hide it in hard to get spot” as he said

that an idea flashed in his mind, ‘*we haven’t taken a look in the ceiling or the walls*’ thought Yami.

“Listen Tofu, I think our missing weapon is in the walls or ceilings, if it's in here, then it will be in either of those places” Yami announced with an excited facial expression, “Sounds good, grab that chair and start” told Tofu. First Tofu and Yami looked for furniture to stand on they decided to move a chair next to the middle of the ceiling and Yami stepped on to take a view of the area; “what do you see?” asked Tofu “no luck here, the only other place must be the walls” stated Yami, Yami stepped down from the chair and began checking the walls; “start feeling for hollow points” stated Tofu. On the left side, they investigated; on the right side, they investigated .. nothing “Have you found anything Tofu” asked Yami “no I haven’t, despite my best efforts” stated Tofu. “I’ll check the floor” Tofu pulled out tools to begin ripping out the floorboards, as he was working next to

the window, he found a strange case, “I found something!” exclaimed Tofu, Yami ran over to the site and as Yami was about to open it; Tofu stopped him, “wait... let’s put some gloves on, there may be some fingerprints on this...” Tofu pulled out some gloves and handed them to Yami; they both put them on and opened the container, inside included components for a rifle that had been taken apart also in the case included 7.62 ammunition with some notes written in a different language. “This is the jackpot!, now let’s leave” mentioned Tofu so they looked around for an escape and found a fire escape on the side of the building; one at a time, they both stepped out into the rain and proceeded to climb down the ladder to the ground level, once there Tofu told Yami “Go grab Apollo, I’ll let his father know that we found what we need” In response, Yami split off from Tofu and headed towards the citadel complex, at the same time, a black vehicle pulled

up in front of him and a man opened the
backseat door and the figure inside told him
“get in now!”

Chapter 5: Trial

{5}

At first sight, Yami Tenshi looked startled at the mysterious vehicle, the tinted windows reflected his shocked expression, in contrast with the demanding passenger telling him to enter the vehicle, he was unsure about who these strange inhabitants were; however, after some thoughts, his gut had told him to trust the mysterious man from the window and so he approached and entered the vehicle. Inside the back seat was Nic Hiroshi, in the front Helios Ata rode with Nic's driver. Nic Hiroshi began the conversation with “I'm sorry to have startled you, but it is important to get to our destination as soon as possible to conduct business, my name is Nic Hiroshi, I will

be Hikari's attorney for this upcoming trial; it is nice to meet you Mr. Tenshi", "You didn't startle me that much" stated Yami slightly relieved.

Helios Ata looked at Yami and began asking "How was the search for evidence?" "Tofu and I were able to locate gunpowder residue from the window lining in the 102nd room, and there was a secret compartment in the floorboards that contained rifle components as well as some ammunition..." he paused for a moment, "there was some strange notes written in a foreign language among the inventory" stated Yami.

"That seems very substantial, I think that it will be of great use for our defense," mentioned Helios; "I would have to agree, say why don't you show me those notes?; there is a possibility that I could decipher some of its contents" Nic Hiroshi exclaimed "I don't have possession of all of the materials because Tofu decided to hold onto most of it; however, if we speak with Tofu then we can

grab all of the stuff that we found” told Yami

“That’s a plan” said Nic. When The vehicle arrived at the Cathedral’s gates, Apollo stood there among the monks surrounded by various conversations. Helios Ata rolled his window down with more consideration than Nic had with Yami and told his son to get in the backseat with his friends. Apollo Ata said his goodbyes to the monks and entered the back seat with Yami and Nic waiting inside. “Hello, Apollo” Yami said, “How’s it going, everyone” asked Apollo; Nic and Yami replied concurrent, “very good”, afterwards the vehicle approached the Yashiharou holding facility; they stopped at the gate to show their identification cards and were let in towards the main entrance, Nic Hiroshi approached the secretary’s counter to inquire about meeting with Hikari Ata, she then proceeded to ask “are there any individuals among you that are not part of the Ata family?” Nic Hiroshi replied that they had

brought along a family friend with them; in response, she stated that “only legal professionals and family members are allowed to attend at this time”, Nic approached Yami and told “I’m sorry, but it seems you are going to have to wait in this room until we have completed our talks,” Yami acknowledged him by stating “That’s okay, I’m disappointed about this, but those are the rules so I will sit here and work on something” Yami approached a chair and began reading while thoughts turned in his mind,an operation's manual on his recently purchased Fuji bicycle. In the meantime, Nic,Helios and Apollo were led into a meeting room; in the room was Hikari chained to his chair and he had a bodyguard standing at attention on the outside door; when Apollo saw his brother sitting there, he ran towards him and hugged him and stated “tomorrow, we are going to kick ass and take names” to Hikari which for the first time in many

days he was able to produce a smirk on his face, “well, I can believe in that” stated Hikari Ata as he gave a big laugh. Nic approached Hikari and stated “we’ve had some breakthroughs, Tofu and Yami were able to locate many items of interest, including: rifle components, ammunition, and some notes from the Sentinel building; Tofu has those items at the moment, and we sent Kurai to meet with him, they should be returning soon.” 2 hours went by and there wasn’t any sign of Tofu or Kurai, Helios suddenly stood up from his seat and with stress wrinkles covering his face, he stated “I’ll go see what happened,” he went to the door and left the meeting room, on the way he noticed Yami still sitting there reading his bicycle manual in a focused trance. Helios approached him and tapped him on the shoulder, “huh.. What the?” Yami looked up at Helios and asked “What’s going on?, where are the others?” Helios looked at Yami stating “Tofu hasn’t arrived at the

facility yet; I am going to look for him, want to come along?” “sure, let’s get going then” mentioned Yami. Helios and Yami proceeded to exit the facility, later after some time of searching, Helios and Yami came across an automobile wreckage on the shoulder of the road, they stopped at the site and exited their vehicle to investigate the scene, at first they didn’t see anyone in the wreckage;however, from the corner of his eyes, Helios noticed a figure lying on the side of the grassy ridge, he advanced quickly to the figure, unsure whether or not the figure was alive or not and kneeled downwards putting his hand on the figure’s shoulder, he moved the figure on its back and saw that it was Tofu lying there unconscious. “Hello!, Tofu are you alright?, Yami come over here!, I found Tofu!” yelled Helios. Yami ran over to them and began looking around, he began thinking “*something here doesn’t seem right,*” once Yami

arrived at the scene;Tofu began to open his eyes and as he woke up, he murmured “where am I? What happened?” he looked up towards Helios and Yami while they were sitting next to him and Helios looked at him and replied “I’d like to know the same thing, do you remember what happened here?”, after trying to collect himself for a moment Tofu began with “Hold on, give me a moment to think.... Oh yes, well it began with when I was driving towards the Yashiharou holding facility when a vehicle emerged on my right side very close to my vehicle, I tried to make space between us, but he was consistently trying to get closer to me so I honked on my horn to get him off, yet that is when he slammed his vehicle into me as a response and persistently kept ramming, because of this I gunned it down the road and when I thought I lost him, I reached a narrow strip of the road and another vehicle materialized out of nowhere and hit me off the

road in which my car flipped and I fell out; miraculously, I survived in one whole piece, but before I fell unconscious I noticed a group of men left their vehicles and began searching my vehicle, when it seemed as if they couldn't find what they were looking for, then returned to their vehicles and sped off", upon hearing this Helios and Yami looked at each other in total surprise, after processing the new information, Helios cleared his throat and stated "I don't think this is a coincidence that this plot happened so close to my son's trial, I hate to ask you this; but did you have the evidence that was found in the building for Hikari's defense trial with you?" Tofu looked at him and exposed a wide smirk, he proceeded to say, "It's not those bastard's lucky day, I had a grudging feeling that something like this would happen so I've hidden the material nearby at a secret location", "That is great to hear, now where can find the evidence?" asked

Helios, Tofu took out a map from his pocket and showed Yami and Helios the location where they could find the evidence, “See, it’s location is between the Citadel and here, let us go get it” Tofu then brushed the dirt off of his pants and the trio headed back to their automobile.

At the Yashiharou
Courthouse

In the following morning, the selection of the jury was made for Arata Unmei’s murder trial; in order to appear to maintain fairness in the trial, a pool of potential jury members was selected not from Yashiharou but from Odatykatsu. Odatykatsu was chosen since the opinion was that it was far enough away that it’s people in theory wouldn’t hold prejudice against Hikari Ata. When Nic Hiroshi heard the news, he consulted Hikari and stated that “I think that the decision to pool a jury from Odatykatsu will help us in our defense, there may be some favorable

bias for us”, in response, Hikari replied “If that is true, then that will be very beneficial for the case, I’m quite shocked to have any advantage given to us.”, “a court case is like poker, sometimes the best move is to stick it out;that is, to not fold despite being down” responded Nic. After their conversation, Nic Hiroshi called the members of the Ata family and their associates for them to come down to the facility in order to briefed about the trials guidelines. Once they arrived, Nic Hiroshi began the conference with “I’m glad that you all could make it today, today is the beginning of the trial; I believe with conviction that we are on the righteous side in this trial; therefore, if we all do our part and with strong dignity,then we will prevail in proving Hikari’s innocence.” after he finished speaking, a loud applause erupted after Nic provided them with more technical details and once they were finished sorting out the specifics;the group

entered the courtroom, and took to their seats in a solemn style, a way that appeared to the casual observer as if a great judgement rested on the shoulders of a higher power. Yami overlooked the courtroom, he had noticed that the judge was taking a recess and asked Nic, “say, isn’t the judge supposed to be here by now?”, “don’t worry about it, he’s consulting with some people, we actually came early by a margin” stated Nic. After a short period of time, the presiding judge Ichimonji Inbo arrived back into the courtroom, as he did, a clerk began speaking in the middle of the courtroom. “Order in the court, the Honorable Mister Justice Ichimonji Inbo presiding”, everyone in the courtroom stood at attention towards the judge. “You may now be seated” stated Justice Ichimonji. The clerk resumed speaking with “Today we will commence the trial of the Government of Yashiharou versus Helios Ata” afterwards he took

his seat. "Are all involved positions present here today?" asked Justice Ichimonji. Kasumi Masato approached her microphone. My name is Kasumi Masato and I will be representing the prosecution for the Government of Yashiharou in this trial, she sat down as the defendant's attorney stands. "Yes, I am present, sir. My name is Nic Hiroshi and I am acting upon the behalf of the defense of the defendant, Hikari Ata in this trial". "Thank you both. Good morning members of the jury, today you will begin the process of being the determiner of justice based on the facts provided, in this process, I may weigh in on specific evidence presented;however, you people are the only ones capable of presenting final judgement with accordance to standard which have been cemented in law, due to the nature of this crime, guilt must be unanimously decided upon for a final conviction, if no unanimous verdict is reached then the trial may result in a

hung jury and thus the prosecution may call for an additional trial at a later date. Now I will ask the prosecution to present its case.” Kasumi Masato stood. “Thank you Justice Ichimonji. Members of the jury, today the state intends to prove without a doubt that the defendant Hikari Ata, had planned to the utmost calculation, to commit the outrageous crime of homicide on the victim, our mayor Arata Unmei on the fateful afternoon of September 19th, 90 FE, in the Yashiharou Plaza.” then the court clerk stood up and asked her “please call the first witness to the stand”, Kasumi Masato then called up her first witness, he approached the stand; “please state your name and your occupation” asked Masato. “My name is Jung Yi Ma, I am an event organizer who organized the recently plaza event for the departed Arata Unmei”. “Mr Ma, would you be so kind as to inform the court as where you were the afternoon of September 19th?”, asked Masato.

“I was next to the stage where Mr. Unmei was giving his speech” stated Jung Ma, “did you happen to notice anything out of the ordinary on the stage or nearby the stage?” asked Masato.

“Yes, I heard a loud noise and shortly afterwards I noticed a figure approaching the stage from the left side” stated Jung Ma. “Do you see the person who was approaching the stage in this courtroom?” asked Masato. “Certainly, he is sitting over in the defendant’s seat” declared Jung Ma. “Okay, now tell me what did you see next?” asked Masato. “I saw Mayor Arata Unmei fall towards the stage and then while laying on the stage, he began crawling towards the back curtains, as he moved there was a trail of blood that followed him meanwhile I observed the defendant running through the curtains to the back of the stage after that, I lost sight of him as I approached Arata Unmei to help out” told Jung Ma. “Did Arata Unmei say anything as when you

approached him?” asked Masato. “I heard him say one phrase ‘find him!’ as he laid there in mortal pain” stated Jung Ma. “That will be all for now,” stated Masato and she took her seat. The Judge looked over to the defense and inquired “Would the defense like to cross examine the witness?”, “Yes, I have some questions for the witness” declared Nic Hiroshi and he stood up and began with “You stated earlier Mr. Ma, that you saw a figure approach the stage after you heard a loud sound, could you repeat from which side you saw this person?” “yes, I saw the figure approach from the left side” stated Jung Ma, “so isn’t it true that you also stated that Mayor Unmei fell towards the stage when he was shot?” asked Nic Hiroshi, “Yes, that is what I saw” told Jung Ma “Well then, if the victim was indeed shot from the left side as you indicate wouldn’t the victim fall backwards not forwards?” as he Nic Hiroshi finished asking his question Kasumi Masato

spoke “Objection! The question provided seems to be assuming elements of the case not confirmed and thus are leading the witness to a prescribed conclusion” declared Masato, Nic Hiroshi continued with “The honorable Ichimonji, “I am not trying to change evidence merely question the observation”, “Objection sustained, please change the question” stated Justice Ichimonji. “Did you observe Hikari Ata holding anything as he approached the stage?” asked Nic Hiroshi, “No, I didn’t see him holding anything as he came closer to Mayor Unmei” mentioned Jung Ma, “did you see the gunshot wounds on the mayor?” asked Nic Hiroshi, “No, I was too far away to see the mortal wounds reported Jung Ma, “you did see the trail of blood, though?” asked Nic Hiroshi, “I did, I saw it when the mayor crawled towards the back curtains” told Ma, “Which direction was the blood trail moving in?” asked Nic, “once the mayor turned

around it looked like it was moving from the podium towards backstage” stated Jung Ma

“okay, so was there any blood before he turned around?” asked Nic, “well... I think I did see that there was some blood behind him before he turned around from my point of view” told Jung Ma. “so, if my interpretation is correct, then there was blood splatter on the ground from before the mayor did turn around” declared Nic Hiroshi,

“Objection.” stated Kasumi Masato, “Withdrawn, that will complete my examination” stated Nic Hiroshi and he sat on the defendant’s bench. “Mr. Ma, you are hereby excused, you may now call the next witness Mrs. Masato” declared Justice Ichimonji. “The prosecution would like to call Hideo Juzaburo to the stand” Hideo approached the stand, “please state your name and occupation” asked Masato. “My name is Hideo Juzaburo, I am a Medical Doctor with a specialty in Human Pathology” stated Juzaburo. “Can you

describe the scene of The Yashiharou plaza on September 19th once you arrived to examine the crime scene?” asked Kasumi Masato. “Yes, initially when I arrived on the scene, a group of people were surrounding the stage where there was a man lying behind the stage curtains with multiple wounds, wounds in which under further inspection seem to have come from a firearm in my professional opinion.” stated Juzaburo. “I understand, what can you tell the court today about these wounds on the victim's body?” asked Masato, “based upon the size and shape of the wounds, they all maintain a consistency that came from the same weapon and the size of bullets shows that it must have been a handgun” told Juzaburo. “How many rounds were in the victim's body?” requested Masato “from my observations, I came to the conclusion that there were three rounds that made an impact within the victim's body” said Juzaburo. “What caliber

of bullet was used in the assassination? Asked Masato “the caliber of bullet used in all three rounds was 9.1x29mm” stated Juzaburo. “At what time was the victim declared dead? asked Masato “the victim was declared dead at the scene of the crime and the time was reported as 16:10 in the afternoon on September 19th” told Juzaburo. “Thank you for time, that will be all for now Dr. Juzaburo” said Masato and she rested on the bench. The Judge announced “the defense may begin its cross examination if it wishes”, “the defense has questions for the good doctor” stated Nic Hiroshi as he stood up with vigor in his step and then asked “Dr. Juzaburo, you have provided a detailed report as to the deceased, Arata Unmei that includes: the caliber size of bullets, the number of rounds, type of weapon and time of death;however, I do not believe that the court has listened to a testimony of where the victim was shot, would you please provide us a detail as to

where the mayor was shot?” after a moment of hesitation the Doctor Juzaburo began with “the victim had one penetrating wound and two perforating wounds, the two bullets that exited the victim’s body rammed into the wooden podium in which the speaker was speaking above; these wounds were delivered into the victim’s back based on the examination” stated Dr. Juzaburo. After Dr. Juzaburo finished speaking, there was a slight gasp given in the courtroom, some murmurs were emerging in the striking silence. “Would the bullet trajectory found from the scene of the crime of the 9.1x 29 mm bullets be able to impact the mayor if they were shot from the mayor’s right side?” questioned Hiroshi. “Objection. Your honor, these questions are leading to a conclusion that hasn’t been proved” stated Kasumi Masato. The judge responded by stating “I am interested in where you are going with your questions Mr. Hiroshi

the objection is overruled, please continue with your questioning”, Dr. Juzaburo was looking at Kasumi Masato, she gave him a slight nod; “from the ballistics, it shows a rightward angle of impact in the mayor’s back so if the mayor had turned before his fatality than it would be possible for the victim to be shot from his right side in my professional opinion”; Nic Hiroshi clasped his fists, “possible... yes, from my understanding of the word, then that means there is some doubt to be cast whether or not my client is responsible for this heinous crime” stated Nic Hiroshi; “it must be the case, unless there is evidence to show that there was another perpetrator at the scene then my conclusion is that the victim must have turned before he was killed” announced Dr. Juzaburo. In response, “the defense would like to call a motion for evidence, specifically the murder weapon from the prosecution” called out Nic Hiroshi. “Based on

the recent questioning, the request will be granted”, Justice Ichimonji looked towards the prosecution “please provide the murder weapon to show to the court Mrs. Masato” asked the Justice Ichimonji. The prosecution gathered the evidence and presented a 9.1x29mm, Smith & Wesson Model 36 to the court. “Here we have today the murder weapon that was used in the assassination, based off the findings of Dr. Juzaburo and other forensics analyst, we can determine a perpetrator, using techniques including the use of Ninhydrin to reveal the fingerprints, as you can see the purple marks here and when we compared them to the defendant’s fingerprints; there was a 100% match.” claimed Kasumi Masato. “You may begin your questioning Nic Hiroshi and afterwards we will take a short recess” stated Justice Ichimonji. “Where was the weapon found?” asked Nic Hiroshi, “the weapon was located a kilometer

away in a gully” stated Kasumi Masato; “so you're telling me that my client did not have the weapon on.... What is that smell?” Nic Hiroshi stated alarmingly, once he mentioned the smell, the other participants in the courtroom noticed the smell as well; there erupted a panic and the clerk approached the judge to tell him where to escape to meanwhile an officer of the law announced “everyone please be calm and leave the premises in an orderly manner, two officers approached Hikari, called for an evacuation and began heading out the front doors where they arrived at the outside light, as they headed down the courthouse stairs, a large explosion erupted nearby; the officers became distracted and Hikari broke free from their clutches and he made a run for it, the officers gave chase and were about to reach him;however, suddenly a car pulled up and a group of men grabbed Hikari, as he struggled, they tied him up and threw him in the back seat

of the car; the cops yelled “stop that right now!” at the same time one of the men pulled a rifle from the car and shot a few rounds into the officers; they collapsed into the dirt and that man got back into the car and the mysterious group drove off in a hurry.

Chapter 6 The Escape

{6}

In the Yashiharou courtyard, the audience of the court scrambled to take cover, while they were doing this, a panic inside the Yashiharou Plaza erupted; citizens fled as fast as they could on foot away from the blast location, the explosion had started a set of fires, they broke out into nearby structures, the authorities seeing this, called the fire department to contain the flames and ordered the court audience to return to their homes until further notice.

Over at the Ata
residence

The following day, Kurai Tenshi walked upstairs to wake up his sons, he announced “It is time to wake up, I know it's early, but now, I need you boys to be up and about now” at the top of the stairs; in response, slowly the two boys woke up and got dressed and headed down the stairs, when they arrived Kurai was sitting at the kitchen table eating breakfast and tuning the radio dial, out of boredom, he turned the dial towards the Yashiharou news channel; when the audio came alive, there was a static noise in the background, soon after a few seconds the broadcast began with the announcer Jay Okyobou beginning the broadcast with “Hello ladies and gentlemen of Yashiharou, this is Jay Okyobou, today we have a special announcement broadcast scheduled; in turn, of recent events that have transpired in and around our area, the local government has issued the following proclamations ‘First, the explosion in Yashiharou

last night was an act of rebellion, because of this; all citizens are ordered to stay inside until a greater stability can be achieved despite this, if compliance is met, then the local citizens' safety is guaranteed. Next if a citizen finds a piece of unknown material, they have an obligation to report it to the proper authorities, also if anyone has information of suspicious activity, then that information should be shared as well. Third, if a citizen is found to be involved with these recent acts of rebellion, then the Government of Yashiharou will publicly punish those who have done wrong to our society', this concludes the official statement, now onto the day's weather broadcast..." Kurai sat there with a thoughtful face and he went to turn the dial off from the station, and then he told his sons, "I think we've heard enough of that nonsense for today, since the area is locked down today I suppose that you boys have a free day, do what you will, " he stood

up, walked towards his office and once he entered, he shut the door quietly. Genso looked at Yami and stated “these officials must be out of their mind to think that people will just sit here with nothing to do”, “I agree, do you have a plan of action?” asked Yami. “Certainly, I am going to consult Dr. Kaufspalding to see if he has connections that can give us a lead as to what happened to Hikari, after all he is a crazy scientist he must be involved somehow” stated Genso with a big laugh. “Yea probably” Yami laughed, “I will be impressed with your magic if you can get there without getting noticed” mentioned Yami. “Oh, you have little faith; I will be back by tonight, say what are you going to do Yami?” asked Genso. “Training is calling me today, I have some ideas for some new techniques, perhaps I’ll contact Apollo to try them out otherwise my path will be solitary”, “that sounds decent” stated Genso after their

conversation, Genso went to the home's front door, he slowly opened it to take a look, '*outside the coast seems clear right now,*' he thought and he left. Once Genso had arrived on the outskirts of the main street; Genso looked around the area and he felt an eerie presence in Yashiharou, he looked at the nearby houses, the buildings that normally housed many people going about their daily activities, was barren and silent, even the local inn was quiet, a feat that even concerned family members and self proclaimed moral leaders couldn't imagine accomplishing on a Saturday, indeed he hadn't seen the town this empty in a long time, "*I better watch my footing*" he murmured, as he progressed further towards the German based Science Institute, he observed a group of people gathering outside of a house on the edge of town, he leaned in for a further look and he saw individuals wielding weapons that appeared to him to be newly manufactured rifles,

Genso witnessed a man take an ascendance up on a soap box and Genso moved closer to listen and overheard, “Gentleman, yesterday’s plan went very well, today we shall implement stage 2 of Operation Panic ,” after hearing this, the audience reacted favorably, the man continued, “let’s head out!”; the group split up into different groups and entered a fleet of multiple military grade vehicles; when Genso saw them moving towards him, he quickly moved to a new position and once the scene was all clear, he made the last stretch to Kaufspalding’s laboratory; as he approached the front door and knocked “Dr. Kaufspalding, please open up, this is an emergency!” he stated, trying to muffle his volume, Genso nonetheless received no answer, after some time he went around the back towards the back window sill, because of the height Genso looked around for a platform to stand on, he found a crate and moved it below

the window, he stepped up on the crate and saw the doctor lying there in the vast room with his head on his desk; in his concern, he pulled out a lockpick and worked on picking the window lock; after some tedious work, he was able to get a satisfactory **click**, once the window opened up Genso climbed into the lab and ran over to the doctor, Genso put his hands on Kaufspalding's shoulders and shook him "wake up, dammit!," huh... It's not time to wake up yet silly" Dr. Kaufpsalding told in a sleepy daze; Genso looking at him in a stern manner, he became aggravated and told him "look, I can't mess around right now, there is some serious stuff going down in Yashiharou", the doctor now appeared more awake "does this commotion have to do with that Arata Unmei murder trial business?", "yes, I would say that it does" stated Genso, the Doctor looked Genso in the eyes and advised "I really want to get involved... politics is very messy and

negative on the mind, those two attributes are some that are best avoided at all costs”, “I understand, I’m simply looking for a lead into a personal matter that is related”, “Do pray tell, what is on your mind my assistant” told Dr. Kaufspalding, “I don’t know if you have turned on the radio in the last few days, but my brother’s friend has been kidnapped and well, I thought to ask you because you might have additional networks to work with along with so, here goes nothing, a little while ago I came across rumors that strange ships have been sailing along the harbor, ships in which are from a foreign entity and seem to be carrying contraband based on the evidence provided, these ships are involved with the Council.”, “The Council, what exactly do you think is going on here?” the doctor asked, with curiosity peaked in his eyes, Genso continued with “along with the ship mystery, there are also rumors of a power struggle within the Council

and the representative government, usually I would disregard crazy ideas, yet when Kasumi Masato was put in charge of the prosecution for the Unmei trial; I wondered what possible motive there was for her taking this case specifically, at the same time the trial gets interrupted by a strange chemical and a follow up bomb blast from the rebellious factions, the idea becomes more clear in my mind and what really made me decide that validity of it all was on my travels to your lab”, “What did you see before you came here?” asked Dr. Kaufspalding, Genso grabbed his own arm nervously “I witnessed a large group of military aged men with heavy firepower gathering and planning operations, there was material in their possession that matched the sightings from those mysterious ships; I must have arrived around there after they finished plotting because they headed out towards Yashiharou’s main square afterwards, I can’t

reasonably come to another conclusion after seeing that type of weaponry and machinery, it must have been the council! declared Genso. “I think from the evidence you’ve spoken about, you seem to back your hypothesis of the council being involved in one way or another in something devious, I would, however, like to ask a few questions though, number one: how do you know that I haven’t been involved into one of these plots you speak of , after all I am a scientist and scientists have in the past sacrificed an ethics code in the name of science and number two: what information could I possibly provide to help your cause even if I did agree to muse over it? Asked Dr. Kaufspalding Genso looked at Dr. Kaufspalding with a serious gaze, “I’ve thought about what you’ve said and I think that you are bluffing because you and I both know that when corrupt organizations achieve their goals, the first action they take is purging people that are

not wanted or rather, those who are not zealous to their cause, it's a matter of self preservation, a human imperative that any fringe benefits wouldn't override; now for what I came to ask of you is any information to the whereabouts of Council Black Sites” told Genso Tenshi, Dr.

Kaufspalding began clapping, “my my... you are a true scientist, you not only provided a claim, you also provided reasonable evidence to explain your ideas; fortunately for you I would rather end up in a ditch then collaborate with those masquerading as the Puritans of society, for your request, I do indeed have knowledge of secret projects;however, I have a request of my own”, “What is it that you would like?” asked Genso, “Once you check out these sites, I want you to report your findings from the expedition for me” stated Dr. Kaufspalding. “I can do that, how much do you know about the topic?” questioned Genso, “let us begin, for the sites themselves, there are

many that are run by the council branch of the government, most of these sites are relatively easy to find information on; however, some of the sites are disguised as in, on the surface it is business as usual, but under the locations there may be additional research being conducted; in my opinion, The Council would not conduct any top secret research in an accessible location so we can generally disregard locations in Honshu, so that leaves a few general locations to check out such as: Saikaido, Iyo, Ryukyu, Ogasawa, Daito, Izu islands.”, “That sounds like a very time consuming eliminating process, what else can we do to narrow the search down?” asked Genso. “If you can arrange the transportation to explore these venues then I will do my part and find out more information” told Kaufspalding. “I will find a way, now I better head out,” stated Genso, “Be careful out there” mentioned Dr. Kaufspalding

and Genso approached the window and climbed out of it.

In another sequence of events happening in Yashiharou,

Yami Tenshi rode his bicycle to the Ata residence, once he arrived at his destination he saw a commotion from inside the house, there he saw Government forces interrogating the Ata family, he rushed to take cover to hide and observe the commotion; “This is outrageous!, what right do you have to barge into my house!” yelled Helios Ata, one of the soldiers in the room approached Helios and punched him, Helios fell back and grasped his face, the soldier then declared “we are currently under martial law therefore your right are not guaranteed, now if you cooperate with us then everything will run smoothly, we want to know the whereabouts of your son Hikari Ata so we can resume the prosecution”, Helios stood back up “I hate to

break the news to you, but I'm as clueless as you all are about his whereabouts” stated Helios, in response the soldier shouted, “such insolence!” the soldier prepared to ready his fist to strike again until, “that’ll be fine for now Sargent” stated another soldier in the background, from what Yami saw, this young man speaking must have been the leader of the group, he walked towards Helios, “my name is Captain Hif Krash, I have my orders gather information about this matter to a sufficient extent, otherwise I will have to take you in” told Cpt. Krash, Yami while still hidden, began to recognize this man as one of the new students introduced at the school and thought “*Whatever this is... it goes deep..*”, and he also noticed that Apollo was not inside the house, “*that crazy guy, where is he?*” he looked around and then decided that he couldn’t do anything with soldiers at the residence; however, he may be able to alert Apollo to what was happening so

he rode his bicycle down the road and passed a handful of kilometers away, he found Apollo training by climbing trees in the forest, Yami departed his bike and ran towards Apollo, Apollo noticed him and with his interest piqued asked “what’s going on, why are you in such a hurry?”, “there are officials at your place, they are interrogating your father; we should hurry back!” Yami yelled. “Alright, let’s go!” Apollo embarked on his bike and the duo headed back to the Ata residence. Once at the compound, they saw a lack of Police presence on the outside, they were very worried so they dropped their bicycles and ran to the house, there they found Apollo’s mother Sola standing there sobbing, “mother, what happened!?”, Sola wiped her eyes and stated “the authorities took your father away Apollo, please do not go after him, I don’t want to lose my son as well,” she stated overcoming her anxiety. Apollo approached the family’s dining

table and slammed his fist down, causing a loud bang, “dammit, I can’t believe this!” before approaching Yami he began thinking *‘this is a very volatile situation, I’m very pessimistic about this;however, I should show support now before it’s too late’* so he patted Apollo on his shoulder and stated “your old man will be fine, have some faith about this; in the meantime, let’s go talk with the others about the situation”, “I think you are on to something, let’s do what we can do in the meantime” Apollo told while calming down, “say, why don’t we travel to Tofu’s shop, he was helpful in your brother’s defense case; that guy has a variety of abilities that may aid us” stated Yami. “That sounds like a good idea” told Apollo and they headed out. - scene

In his confinement, Helios thinks about his son

Helios Ata was taken to the outskirts of Yashiharou, he was released from the transport

vehicle and surrounded by his captures, Captain Hif Krash approached him and began speaking with “let us begin by speaking about your loyalties during the last great war of our nation, you were an esteemed scientist that aided our efforts in Steam development, those efforts have been recognized by our peoples’, with that being said; why is it that refuse to reaffirm your loyalties at this time of need, after all your son has committed a very serious sin surely is it not justified that he face justice for his actions?” questioned Cpt. Krash, Helios looked at him with fire in his eyes, “my son has no involvement in the murder of Arata Unmei, for that I am 100 percent certain and nothing you can say will change my mind” stated Helios. “Is that all you have to say?” asked Cpt. Krash, “Certainly” told Helios; “You have left me no choice; men, tie this man up!” the soldiers charged Helios, they tied him to a tree and the men lifted him up so that he

lay there hanging from the tree branch with the noose around his chest, as he hung there, the men later tied additional lead weights to his ankles. As the day progressed, as Helios felt the weight tugging him down towards the earth, Cpt. Krash approached, standing still in front of him, “if you change your mind then yell to the men and they will let you down” and he walked away and the majority of the men drove off. A few days passed and Helios had told the men nothing, Cpt. Krash returned with his entourage and stated “I must commend you on your determination to suffer such a pain, very well; men! Let this man down”, they followed his orders and let Helios down and after, Helios collapsed so the men lifted him up by under his arms; Cpt Krash observed the lack of circulation in Helios legs, “it looks like you will be needing medical attention soon; please, let’s end this folly by telling me where your son is”, Helios stayed silent so Cpt

Krash stated “this is your final chance, where is your son!” Krash yelled, determined to win his way, Helios did not respond so he walked closer to Helios and ordered the guards to place Helios on his knees and Captain Krash pulled out his Type 14 Nambu and told Helios “goodbye” and shot Helios twice in the chest and once in the head. As Helios Ata’s dead body lay there in the grass, the officials departed in their vehicles, shaking off their responsibility while elsewhere a few days prior Apollo and Yami entered Tofu’s shop to collaborate on what would become an exceptional journey.

A few days prior, at

Tofu’s Shop

“Welcome my friends, how are you?”

Asked Tofu, Yami and Apollo sat down next to Tofu’s counter, Yami began with “there is a

negative situation going on at the moment, Helios was taken in by the police” told Yami while Apollo sat there quietly. Tofu looked at Apollo and stated “today, Nic Hiroshi called me and told me that he received a waiver from the ban in order to head to the courthouse to bring the evidence about the Unmei case, I can contact him to see if he notices anything strange going on”, “thank you” stated Apollo. Tofu walked over to the phone and dialed up Nic, “hello, Nic?” asked Tofu; “Tofu, the situation is bad over here, some of the rebels have started an assault in the Yashiharou plaza, I’m in my office right now taking cover, I’ll try to make my way over there as soon as possible” told Nic Hiroshi in a panicked tone and he hung up. Tofu placed the phone back on the rung, “A rebellion is transpiring downtown, they are detonating explosives and shooting people; perhaps, we can use this bad situation to our advantage”

mentioned Tofu, “what do you mean?” asked Yami. “It is fortunate that I have been working on an excellent airplane, the model is a Cessna 172; the reason why I was working on it; was that Kurai Tenshi had planned to fly to *Iyo* to make a pilgrimage, in order to give offerings and travel through the historical paths, I even got an advance payment from him;however, because the environment has changed, maybe we could ask him to use it, to locate Helios and maybe even Hikari Ata” told Tofu. “Let’s do it!” announced Apollo, Yami cleared his throat, “I’m surprised about what you’ve said Tofu; although, I disagree with your central idea, it's too dangerous; the rebels and government will both take aim at us,and besides who would pilot the plane; that is,well enough for us to dodge heavy fire? Diplomacy seems to be our only true pragmatic option in this particular situation, let’s wait for Nic Hiroshi to arrive and we can further

deliberate on the matter”, Tofu and Apollo both looked at Yami in disappointment, Apollo spoke in an erratic manner “you are right Yami, we are only three men, we can’t take on an entire company”, after that they then entered a time of silence and Nic Hiroshi arrived at the doorway of the shop, once there he collapsed; Tofu hurried over to him and found that Nic Hiroshi, was hit on his side, “must have been a stray bullet” stated Nic as he became more pale in his face, “quickly grab my medical kit from that coubert on the right side at the top!” Apollo sprinted over with the kit, handed it to Tofu; in his hand, he pulled out a knife and asked Apollo Ata to keep pressure while he removed the bullet from Nic Hiroshi’s side, much to the disregard of Nic’s intense pain, “Yami!, grab a bottle of booze from the coubert,” shouted Tofu. Yami ran the bottle over to Tofu and Tofu made Nic down some of the whisky. The group helped to patch Nic up, after Nic Hiroshi

regained some strength he told them that, “I saw many of the locals of Yashiharou Plaza lying on the ground, from what I saw, it seems as if the government was losing the battle, so let us barricade for the remainder of the day and try to tell as many people as we can contact to stay out of the area,” Tofu told the other members that he had some camping equipment they could use for the night and spent the rest of the day planning for the next day. The next day, once the sun for the following day rose, Tofu approached the radio and turned on the dial and what the group heard shocked them, an unknown man began speaking “My fellow citizens, today marks a new day in the future of Yashiharou, the corruption of yesteryear has been annihilated and now the rightful heir to this land has ascended; *The Council*, some of you may have heard strange rumors of our actions, but rest assured that our cause is a righteous one, once our organization

witnessed the tragic murder of mayor Arata Unmei, we knew the time to take action had come upon us, so regrettably because the former leadership didn't see our reasonable policy as the correct one and after many attempts at diplomacy, the old government leadership had to be purged from office; nonetheless, the gods are on our side so we were victorious despite limited numbers, after our military triumph; the leadership of the old government has recognized our sovereignty and rightful rule here thus there will be some changes made, mostly administrative yet, some of the troublemakers must be dealt with at first so we can all enjoy a better world; over the course of the next few hours, these routes will begin; have no fear as if you are innocent then no harm will come; that is all, good day subjects."

Chapter 7 Sinister

{7}

The Censor raids began, citizens were grabbed from their homes and dragged into the streets, most of these unfortunate souls were members of the old government, while some had stanchied loyalties to the government, others were just opportunists looking to increase their perceived value to society. No institution remained untouched from these raids, even the Yashiharou school of Academics and Martial Arts was targeted, the principal was charged with agitation, for pushing a non compliance doctrine to the precious youths. Despite the distaste for these actions, the resistance given from the people was minor, most accepted the unlucky fate of others with apathy, yet at the same time a few began plotting of resistance, over time the Ata family and the Tenshi family saw the

disappearance of Helios as the direct threat not only to themselves but also to the people.

Eventually, Genso became stuck on finding a way to explore the different black sites until Yami told him about the plane that Tofu had completed just before the new government takeover. “We should ask Kurai to use it” Genso instructed, “I’m not sure about that, our father will prioritize our safety first,” spoke Yami mirthless, Genso approached Yami and stated “Our father is more of a daredevil than, you know, he’s towed the line since mother is away, but if we show our determination to do this then he’ll have to at least think about it” informed Genso confidently, “fine, nothing can get worse than what we are under currently” stated Yami steadfast. The brothers approached Kurai’s office and knocked on the door. “Come in!” yelled Kurai from his desk. Genso approached determined and pronounced “We are here to ask to use your plane to find our

friend Hikari Ata”, “no way in hell” responded Genso, Genso not taking this setback as given, “tell me exactly why not” stated Genso. “The reason is very simple, you need a plan if you are going to accomplish any feat; moving aimlessly will not help the situation” Kurai stated, he continued with “come back with a plan and I may consider it, otherwise forget about it” Kurai announced. “That’s fine,” stated Genso and Yami looking in disbelief followed his brother out of the office and shut the door, Genso looked back at his papers and had an amused expression on him, he thought *‘this development sure was to be expected, after all Artesia and I are very ardent for what we want, hopefully we all can make it out of this mess in one piece,’* and he continued his work. Genso ran up the stairs and grabbed some drafting paper and writing utensils, “come on, let’s get going! Genso told Yami, “where do you want to go?” asked Yami, “I’ve been working with

Professor Kaufspalding on a plan, I need to let him know that I've got the transportation available"; "okay, we'll head out." stated Yami.

A phone rings in the Ata residence, Sola Ata picked up the phone..

The news of Helios Ata's fate hit the Ata family very hard, yet Apollo did not believe the evidence stated until he saw the motionless corpse of his father, after this sighting, an internal anger began stirring inside of him; he knew without a doubt who was to blame and he was very determined to get revenge for this unjust persecution, so when the opportunity arose, Apollo dashed over to Tofu's shop and began brainstorming for their journey. When Genso and Yami arrived, they were shocked to see an unusual serious face on their friend, an expression that exhumed tension. "What's the matter?" asked Yami unaware, Apollo stood up from the table and told him "The worst has

happened ...my fears have come to pass now, my father is no longer among the living;therefore, I will find a method for proper revenge” Yami looked stunned, it had been one of the most serious statements Apollo had ever said to him and because of it, he knew that they must continue no matter the costs, Yami without thinking told Apollo, “it must have been that Captain I saw interrogating Helios, he must have been responsible; however, Apollo I am warning you, we need to focus on the mission, after that we will go from there”, Apollo looked downtrodden, “what is the mission exactly?” asked Apollo, Genso finally spoke up, “we just got back from Dr. Kaufspalding’s laboratory; the plan is to find the black sites of the Council, if we can do that then we should be able to find your brother, in order to accomplish this, I think we should split up our search, Apollo and Yami will go north and I will travel south” told Genso.

“What is the main objective of the search?” asked Apollo, “first, we need to locate the site, once that task is accomplished either group will contact the other and then plan a method of attack” stated Genso. “I understand that, but we only have one operable plane, right?” asked Apollo. “Since I am traveling alone, I will take the plane for better security, you two will take a boat that someone we know will connect us with.” told Genso “I’ve never traveled far in a boat before, it should be interesting” stated Yami, “Who is going to bring the vessel?” asked Apollo, Genso looked at the group and smirked, saying “you will see in a short time, she should be here soon” he stated. After a few minutes, there was a knock on the door, Genso answered the door, “yes, please come in” at the door was none other than Eis Hiroshi at the door. “Eis, what are you doing here?” asked Yami, she sat down on a chair, “my father is a boat builder, didn’t you know that?”

asked Eis, “oh, I never thought to ask” stated Yami embarrassed, “it’s alright, the whole thing seems like good luck one of the reason’s Genso was able to come in contact with Dr.

Kaufspalding was because of my family’s relationship with the boat making business, steam is a major component of the technology” told Eis gleaming with pride, Genso with his back against the counter, “I appreciate it, ma’am” and Genso tipped his hat, “who you calling ma'am, I’m still young!?” Eis declared in anger while chasing after Genso, seeing this, the group began laughing. When the commotion settled, Eis collected herself and stated “follow me to the yard, there you will find the boat to take you where you want to go”, the group agreed and headed out. Once they arrived at the naval yard, Apollo and Genos admired the craftsmanship of the vessel, it had a u-shaped hull made out of a cedar with an interior composed of cypress, the

port and starboard donned midnight black paint, the most impressive features however, were that of the mechanisms of the boat of which donned a triple-expansion steam engine, an engine in which the steam passes through the cylinders of larger sizes as the internal pressure decreased, this allowed for the propellers to allow the sailors to cross large areas of maritime seas without the need for laborious manual rowing. “Wow, this is an incredible vessel!” exclaimed Yami, Eis smirked “I’m glad that you like it, just remember to take care of the her, there was a lot of work put into it,” she stated. “With that settled, here is a map of the area you guys will be travelling, it includes the waterways for the Korean Strait, and the nearby provinces of Saro-guk and Honam, when you arrive ride the coast up towards Wonju and start there, what you are looking for is Site 04, this is where Dr. Kaufspalding marked on the map. One last thing, the doctor told me to warn

you all that the coast may have additional security so tread lightly and stay in cover as much as possible” Yami and Apollo both stated “thank you for your help. We will do our best” and headed out the doors.

The group split up, when Yami and Genso arrived home, they told their father about the new plan and he accepted. The group decided to leave in the pitch black night because they thought that there were going to be fewer agents of Enryo Sora lurking near the coast. Despite their best efforts, they couldn't have been more wrong. Genso, Yami and Apollo arrived at the beachhead, as they were about to leave the port, soldiers surrounded the area, “freeze!, no one moves!” yelled a few of the men. “Oh shit!” cursed Apollo, “stay calm, get going; I have a backup plan,” told Yami and Genso took off running and unlatched their vessel, soldiers began shooting at the boat, while the pair took

cover, Genso pulled out a mechanism from his pocket and flipped a switch, it sets off explosives *KABOOM* and a smoke screen misted the group, in the confusion, Genso yelled “hurry!, you don’t have much time!, and Yami gunned the pedal and the vessel speed off, in the resultant chaos, Genso ran like hell towards Tofu’s shop and laid low for the rest of the night. Once, Yami felt they were in the clear, he analyzed the boat’s structure, and stated “we were very fortunate that our engine wasn’t hit, or else we’d be goners”, Apollo looked at him and smiled, saying “perhaps, my new relationship with the foreign god has provided us safety.”, “whatever the reason for our luck, I’ll take it” mentioned Yami and he handed Apollo the map, “take a look at it when the sun goes up, I’m going to fall asleep for a while, I’ll take charge in a few hours.” after some traveling, Apollo could see in the sunrise that the coasts of the peninsula were on guard,

he navigated the craft rightward and turned off the engine, letting the vessel flow with the northeastern current, the guards on the coast didn't seem to mind the ghost vessel and continued on their guard duty. After the time delay, they made it to Wonju and landed the vessel on a remote beachhead, Apollo and Yami hid the craft in the covering of a nearby cave and headed into the mountainous landscape. Wonju's landscape contained many mountain peaks that covered the peninsula on the coast, from its sources came the headstream that fed into Korea's major rivers including the Han River because of this, Yami told Apollo that they should embark on one of these waterways if they couldn't find Site 04. Apollo and Yami began their journey into the mountains by scouting out the nearby area, once they determined that the area was clear, they set up a marked camp for the when the sun went down, "remember now, meet

back up here at 22:00 hours, otherwise I'll assume we have problems" told Yami to Apollo. "I understand" stated Apollo and they split off into separate directions, Yami stayed back and set up an A-frame terrace by landmarking a tree with a forked branch at 6 ft in the air next, Yami lifted a long fallen tree and placed it into the forked branch, he padded the tree with support branches to keep it steady, after that, he took the local vegetation and spread it on the area from bottom to top to mask its presence after he finished, he wiped his forehead with his arm; and looked at his watch, *'15:00 in the afternoon, not too bad; I should head into my area of search now'*, and so he went west into the further dense woods. Meanwhile, on Apollo's search, he came across a campsite that appeared to be abandoned so he ventured down towards the center, there he found some timber lying by the pit and other supplies, when he went to leave, he saw some

rumbling in the nearby brush, Apollo approached the noise with short steps until a snake rushed out swinging its body, Apollo caught off guard fell backwards and the snake proceeded to lung at his arm with its teeth extended, it bites him in his forearm, in shock, he swung his arm rightward, the snake held on then quickly Apollo used his left hand and ripped the snake off his arm and threw it; he got up and stepped on its tail as it ran away and killed it with his knife. Afterwards, Apollo looked at his right arm and saw a wound that was already swelling and blistering, *'this is bad, I need to hurry back to get treatment'* so he headed back to the campsite; on the way back, he began losing consciousness while he was doing so he saw in his blurry eyes some people standing in the distance and thinking he'd be okay, he finally collapsed. When Apollo awoke, he was lying on a bed in a shelter, first he looked at his arm and noticed that it was

bandaged up, a voice emerged from the other end of the room “you were lucky that we found you lying there, if you hadn't had any help; you'd be a dead man” told the mysterious voice. “Who are you?” asked Apollo, “we call ourselves 빛의 추종자, or as you would say ‘Followers of light, we train our body and our souls up in these mountains as we do not belong to modern life, it doesn't seem to suit us; now for the matter of your injury, you were bitten by a rock snake, it is a venomous creature;however, with the aid of some herbal medicine, we were able to stabilize you, yet it will take time for your body to recover from your journey. My name is Kwak Hwan Seung, nice to meet you,” stated Kwak Seung with a smile on his face. “Thank you for your help, my name is Apollo; I come from over the sea on a mission, but I can't reveal the details of that... just know it's for a good cause.” stated Apollo, “I will take you on your word for that, anyways be

careful as there are men who make the rounds near here, they sometimes stop in to check for stowaways;because of that you should prepare yourself” Kwak stated. “I can do that,” stated Apollo and so over the course of the following 2 days, Apollo tried to make contact to Yami to no avail, in distress, he decided that the best course of action was to rest up until he could leave. The guards arrived on the 3rd day, they demanded to audit the monks living quarters and once they reached Kwak’s room, they asked him, “now who may that be?”, “he’s just a visitor from a nearby village, he was injured by a snake so we’re offering him a place to stay until he recovers.” stated Kwak. “I’ll be the judge of that,” stated the man and he approached Apollo’s bedside, “young man, what’s your name?”, “I have no name... rather it isn’t important as it pertains to this world and I don’t adhere to the laws of this world.” stated Apollo with smooth acting. The

man looked disgruntled, “if that is the case then come speak with our leader and he will see what your worth is” and so the men grabbed Apollo and took him to the main square. Once there, they let him go and he stumbled forward, in front of Apollo was a wild looking man, whose years of battle define him. “Ah yes, aren’t you an interesting specimen, tell me; what style are you proficient in?” asked the wild man. “Why do you suppose I train in the ways?” asked Apollo. “It is because, I see the fight in your eyes, I want to battle you, if you accept; you’ll have 3 days to recover, if you win then you are free to leave and you won’t be bothered by us; but if you lose then you will be our prisoner, what do you have to say?” asked the wild man. “I accept your challenge” stated Apollo. “Excellent! Foux hasn’t had a worthy opponent in a while, come my men, let’s return to base.” and the group left. Once they were gone, Apollo asked “who were those guys

anyways?”, “they are simple thugs of the mining complex, they search in our area every week or so in order to take supplies from us. Their leader’s name is Foux Hou, I fear that he is stronger than you are currently, but he isn’t wrong about one thing, you do seem to have potential, I think that we can help you unlock some of your potential” stated Kwak. “You’ve gotten my interests piqued” told Apollo and so they began training. Elsewhere in the Vulbaek, Yami began to worry when Apollo didn’t show up at 22:00 hours, *‘think... what should I do now?’* he asked himself and decided “it’s time to head towards Apollo’s direction; if he’s injured then there may be something I can do to help” so he headed north trying to trace Apollo’s tracks, when arrived at the encampment where Apollo was bitten, in the area there were many of Foux Hou’s men investigating the area. After some time, it seemed as if they began leaving, Yami

approached slowly, on the trail he found a dead snake with a knife wound on the corpse. Upon examination, Yami noticed that the wound looked a lot like the knife that he and Apollo brought, he thought to himself *‘this better not be Apollo’s doing, otherwise he’s in a deep mess; I might be looking for a corpse instead...’*, unknowing to Yami behind him two men approached and spotted him “you there! Stop where you are!” one of them shouted, Yami lifted his hands above his head and the pair approached, “we’re taking you in now!” and so as one of them went to handcuff Yami, he grabbed the man's arm and pulled downward and used his knee to bash it in his head, the man staggered backward; Yami grabbed him by the neck and charged the second man; in shock, the second man began firing at his comrade and Yami until Yami slammed his captive in the second man putting them on the ground, he let go of the gun

and Yami grabbed it, held his breath and shot the man twice in the chest. The commotion alerted the others to Yami's location, and they rushed back to the encampment; Yami found a hiding place in one of the trees and observed the center of the site, from his calculation he determined that there were 5 men and if he were going to survive he determined then he must end them without being seen. After an hour of high alert searching, Foux's men began patrols around the area; Yami climbed down from his perch and found some mud to camouflage himself. Due to the nature of the patrols, one of the guards would step out farther than the rest and when one did, Yami would sneak up behind the man when he turned around to return and covered his mouth and stabbed him in the spine, this brutal technique worked and Yami dragged the body to a nearby brush, because of the missing patrol, Yami had to act fast; so he moved to the next

patrol and took him out. Now there were 3 men remaining on the search, two of the men were talking to one another and another stood guard, in order to attract the single man's attention, Yami threw a stick to the outside corridor, the guard heard the noise and as he approached, Yami attacked him from the side and neutralized him; for the final pair, Yami went to climb onto the roof of the building that they were standing under, he determined the time, jumped down on one of the men then quickly rushed the second stabbing both of them to their demise. The killing Yami committed deeply affected him so he approached an offering shrine and burned incense while giving prayer '*may these souls rest for eternity*' he remarked under his breath and continued forward on his quest to find Apollo. Yami Tenshi kept traveling northwards when he reached the village of The Followers of Light he was greeted by one of the monks "welcome my

fellow traveler, what brings you here today?" asked the monk, "I'm here looking for my friend, from my discoveries it looks as if he may have been injured so I'd like to meet with him soon" stated Yami. "Is that so?" asked the monk with strong skepticism, "tell me, what is your name?" continued the monk. "My name is Yami Tenshi and my friend's name is Apollo, we were separated on our journey" mentioned Yami. "Ah yes, he is here;however, he may not be disturbed because he has an important duty to accomplish for tomorrow" told the monk. "What has he gotten himself into?" asked Yami in a foul mood. "Oh, you misunderstood me; I mean, his duty is one of greatness, not of mischief; tell you what, if you would like; you may stay here in a nearby room, the condition of this offer is that you don't interfere with his training" declared the monk. "I can accept those terms, say what is your name?" asked Yami. "It's not polite to ask the name of

others without telling your own, but nonetheless my name is Kwak Hwan Seung, it's good to meet another of the same cloth as my disciple" told Kwak. "the name is Yami Tenshi, I hope that Apollo keeps to his promise", "haha he sure will if he knows what's good for him," stated Kwak, hearing this statement, Yami got a chill down his spine, yet Yami was in no mental shape to produce a comeback so he conceded to the demands of Kwak and Yami was lead to his room, once there he began thinking about the night's events, *'there was nothing I could do, those men would have taken me away and probably tortured me... maybe even killed me; in the end, what's done is done, I must continue forward, although I have a bad feeling about what is going to happen soon'* and so after his internal monologue he began to feel sleepy and eventually fell asleep. Just across the way, Apollo was studying diagrams that Kwak had given him, once Kwak arrived in his training

area, he asked Apollo “do you understand the fundamentals?”, “I’m not completely sure but I will do whatever it takes to succeed, that is my way” stated Apollo exalting pride. “That’s good, it's mainly attitude that uplifts the soul, when the soul is strong, then amazing attributes can be discovered through hard work, **“prepare for tomorrow!”**

Chapter 8 Amusement

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From the mountains emerged a thin layer of mist and the slightest rain; Apollo stood in the center of the courtyard being pelted ever so slightly by this rain, standing there, he was in an intense focus when Kwak Hwan Seung approached him and began with “For you to master the fundamentals, you must perform deeds and withstand the corresponding struggle otherwise you will not be prepared for your struggle against Foux Hou”, “I understand the

technique's requirements, please proceed with the instructions" stated Apollo. "Very well, let's begin; your first task will be to chase after a particular animal", "an animal? Why that can't be that difficult" puzzled Apollo, "listen to me now; this animal you'll be chasing is a tiger that lives in the mountains, the animal hasn't been captured before because it moves at a much faster speed than normal, the only way you'll be able to capture it and place this seal on its head is by harvesting your inner energy to charge at it, here is the seal" he handed it to Apollo. Kwak continued his mentoring, "there is one advantage in that, the animal stays in one general habitat, thus it will be found after a little effort; the location is: Mount Taebaekson, it's location is near the peak of the mountain closest to the Wonju border." Kwak pulled a map from his satchel, "here take this, it's a map of the area; it shouldn't be a long journey. After the

conversation, Apollo headed southwest into the range; he ran as fast as he could up the steep terrain, as he began getting fatigued, Apollo Ata used the technique he read in the fundamental works in order to release more internal energy, in this he was able to keep moving forward. After a few hours past in his trek, Apollo made it to the location and began searching for the animal, after some searching he found the tiger resting on top of a large boulder, its fur consists of a coarse winter coat that masked its ears, its color was of a dark persimmon hue masked with contourless pitch black stripes. *'Let me see if I can approach it without making noise'* he thought and he approached watching his steps, when had just about arrived three fourths of the way, he stepped on a pebble and crushed it, the noise alerted the animal from its sleep; the tiger jumped at Apollo, he dodged to the left side, from there he leapt forward to place the seal and the

tiger dashed away from him on the right side, the velocity was so fast that it made sound from the cutting the air. From his movement Apollo, rolled into the front of the resting ground. With his back against the structure Apollo began contemplating *'he's too fast to charge at, I need to outsmart him... I got it, time to distract him'*, Apollo pulled his knife from the sheaf and cut a large amount of his sleeve off his shirt and grabbed it in his left hand. The tiger turned towards Apollo, Apollo started yelling "come here! You can't catch me!" and continued on with further taunts, the tiger visibly annoyed charged at Apollo, it leaped towards his arm and Apollo focused his energy in it and moved it away quickly, turning his torso and placed the seal on the tiger's forehead. The tiger reacted by becoming drowsy and then it collapsed into a deep sleep. *'What the hell was that seal's contents?'* thought Apollo. As Apollo descended

down the mountain's path;a rustle emerged from a nearby rock; the noise alerted Apollo, "who's there?" he shouted. From the shadows came Kwak emerged with his chest stuck out, he approached Apollo and once close enough, he began clapping and declared, "congratulations!, my seal seemed to do its intended job apparently" Kwak stated. "How did you manage to make that seal?" asked Apollo with confusion on his face. "It is simple really... experience, yes... that's it." Kwak stated and continued with "the power of harnessing energy allows for the mechanisms to impose one's will on our present reality, it comes from deliberate experience of the physical and the mental, for your further training, this path will not be converged; however, along with the speed you've exhibited there will also be strength training as it will be necessary to fight Foux , he is a is a formidable fighter." "you don't say.. Wait a minute, were you

observing my fight?!” Apollo yelled, as his face grew a red hue. “I sure was, if I wasn’t taking care to look out for you, I wouldn’t be a good teacher, would I?” asked Kwak in a Socratic manner. “I understand your intention, now what is the next performance that I need to put on?” begrudgingly asked Apollo. “Your second task will be focused on robustness; furthermore, let us continue by moving towards the summit of the mountains” so Apollo and Kwak walked down the mountain path, once they arrived Kwak showed him “Here is a wood chopping site, here you will chop 100 piece of hardwood in order to warm up,” Kwak picked up the ax on the stump and handed it to Apollo, Apollo not aware of the difficulty dived right into the labor; after the 15th chop of the sharp ax, he looked to Kwak and stated “this is a difficult task, there must be a way to make this easier,” Kwak looked at Apollo, he took the ax from Apollo and chopped the wood

with ease. “How’d you do that?” inquired Apollo.

“I will give you a hint, try to center your energy at the point of impact, if you can do that, then it is in the same matter of cutting, as if you were cutting through the air.” and so, Apollo began trying to focus on the edge of the ax, he struck the log “no dice... “ he murmured and continued working; “I’m going to go get lunch, I’ll be back” stated Kwak and he headed outbound from the mountain path. After slogging through the timber logs, Apollo reached the 91st log, this time however, he concentrated his focus on a single point with intense focus and notched a clean cut into the wood with a rapid and fierce strike. In a shock of his accomplishment, Apollo leaned forward not understanding what happened and hit the next one, same result until he finished the hundredth log. He wiped the sweat from his forehead and looked around for Kwak. When he didn’t find him, he called out “where are you?”,

“I’m down here!” came an echoing reply. Apollo hurried down the path and found Kwak lifting giant logs on his shoulders, he dropped them, picked one up and slammed one of the logs into the earth’s material. Apollo stood in place in awe, “this is the potential of harnessing your will, its eternal energy of yourself and your surroundings, you have learned the basics of the principle, now you will face a difficult challenge, you must punch this log into the mountain, once you have reached the threshold; the second log will follow suit.” stated Kwak. Apollo feeling confident from his previous triumph approached the log, stood in standard position and wailed the log with a fierce punch; despite his effort, the log stayed still and Apollo’s fist held red coloring from the impact. Kwak approached Apollo, he placed his hand on Apollo’s left shoulder, “use the first principles, concentrate your blow at a singular point;remember, it's not about using

pure strength, rather it's a matter of technique.”

In the second attempt, Apollo focused and hit a smaller area, the log this time moved a centimeter inwards, he repeated the action, and slowly he began moving the log into the earth.

After a lot of tries, Apollo was able to hit the massive log an inch inwards at a time, he kept punching for a few hours, eventually he got the log halfway in the mountain, Apollo stopped, “I don’t have enough strength left now” he announced. Kwak walked over to the terrain and stated “You’ll get the hang of it, let me show you the potential.” Apollo stood back and Kwak stood in position in front of the log, he retracted his shoulder, and with exceptional speed and precision punched the log, from its middle position, it rushed to a stump in the earth. Kwak grabbed the second log motioned for Apollo to hold it up into the land and Kwak punched the log again into the halfway point, Apollo let go of

his grip and Kwak hit the surface to condense into another stump. Apollo stood there stunned, Kwak smiled and ascertained “My ability is not from natural talent, it is from a long time of training and energy concentration, we don’t have the time to perfect the technique; yet, land a blow of relative strength and preciseness will even take down Foux Hou if landed on the correct spot; that’s enough for today, let’s head back to the settlement. The pair trekked back to the site, when they arrived Kwak told Apollo, “the next day, will be the final day of preparation, I will then teach you some basics of our martial arts practices, after that, the rest of the battle is up to you” Apollo smirked with pride and headed back to his bed exhausted. Later in the evening, Kwak went to see Yami, there he found Yami meditating in the center of the room he was staying in. “Your friend is progressing at a rapid pace, the training will thus conclude tomorrow, I hope your stay

here has been pleasant, Mr. Yami Tenshi.” Yami left his concentration state and stood up and approached Kwak, once in front of him he looked him in the eyes, “I have nothing to complain about, my meditations are helping me consider some previous actions and future actions.” told Yami. “That’s excellent, if I may; one of the reasons for the sepeare training is that simply, you don’t need to focus on your concentration, in your case in particular, you need time to think; I can see it from your aura.”, “I’m genuinely surprised, how do you know this?” inquired Yami. Kwak grinned, “I can’t reveal to you my methods, those must be earned from true learning, your time will come, it's now time to observe tomorrow’s struggle”; “I understand” Yami replied. “Take care, get a good night of sleep” and so Kwak left the area and the night passed

At sunrise, the final
preparation begins

Just as the sun began its daily rise, Apollo met Kwak at the center of the prayer's gathering square, he welcomed Apollo, "today, there will be one teaching and its offsets principles will be explored, the teaching is about disarmament, it is clear that Foux Hou is not of reputable character; therefore, if treachery is exhibited then you must have a strong defense as to protect yourself; here is a staff, come at me!" Kwak announced and threw the staff to Apollo Ata. Apollo came charging at Kwak head on, he went for a side swipe, Kwak used his arm to block and used his right arm to wrap around the staff; once there, he moved his left arm and pulled downwards, from the force, Apollo fell forward and Kwak flipped him over his right shoulder, Apollo fell face first to the ground, Kwak walked over and helped him up. "Did you see what mechanisms I used?" asked

Kwak to Apollo. “I believe so, it looked as if you made a pivot from your arm and used my own energy against me” stated Apollo producing a nervous utterance, Kwak responded with “that’s mostly correct, here, try again; this time you should see more clearly; and so, Apollo rushed again, this time he came and slashed diagonally downwards from the right side of Kwak, Kwak stepped forward rapidly with his right foot and hit Apollo’s shoulder blade, in response, Apollo fell to his knees and dropped the staff. “The purpose of this technique is to move fast by evading first, then aiming for a weak spot that opens on the opponent’s body, as you may have known, it is a pressure point, If done correctly, then the muscles will relieve itself, giving way for a follow up striking technique.” Apollo stood back up and took position. “There is one further technique that I will exhibit” told Kwak and he pulled out a knife and handed it to Apollo, “come

at me from any angle”; in response, Apollo aimed for Kwak’s chest with a piercing blow, Kwak moved and side swiped it, he used his eyes and looked to the side, Apollo followed suit and then, Kwak crunched over and hit him in the liver; Apollo gasped for breath and dropped the weapon. “In the scenario, I didn’t just simply use a quick movement to evade, movement of the eyes allows for distraction and allows the perpetrator to go for a vulnerability after creating an illusion of an afterimage, well that will be all for today, until next time.”

At dawn

In the morning, Foux Hou and his men arrived at the Followers of light’s settlement. “I, Foux Hou am here for a fight, bring forth the challenger!” he yelled. Apollo emerged from the obscure mist to meet his foe in the square, “I am here to accept your challenge” announced Apollo. Foux Hou stepped forward and threw off

his jacket, and walked to the middle of the square, they bumped fists and started fighting. Foux made the first move, he been punching rapidly; in a brief opening, Apollo held his concentration and punched into Foux's chest, Foux staggered backwards, he smirked and thought '*this is going to be fun*', Kwak surprised Apollo by leaning in and attempting a tackle, Apollo tried moving out of the way to his right;however, Kwak shifted his legs, and completed the takedown, as he was on top of Apollo he starts walloping his face; Apollo blocks the best he could but takes damage, Apollo concentrates his energy into Foux's knee to suspend it then, Apollo rammed his elbow into Foux's chest; the attack breaks the hold and Apollo took standard fighting position. On the opposite side of the area, Yami was watching the fight, he was shocked at Apollo's growth and his new abilities, thinking '*don't remember him being*

able to hit so decisively; ...interesting,' Yami

Tenshi spoke to Kwak, “at some point, I’d like to learn some of those techniques”, Kwak smiled while stating “you’ve only seen the beginning, have patience and see what happens”, the pair’s response wasn’t the only surprised reaction in the area, Foux’s men began whispering about the events transpiring “this is going to be a good one”, “yes, it’s been a while since I’ve seen a good fight ;although, the boss hasn’t gotten serious yet..” another one remarked. Foux side kicked at Apollo’s head, Apollo dodged under the kick, Foux moves his shoulder inward and hits Apollo against a fencing unit lying on the perimeter, Foux punches Apollo through the timber and Apollo lands grudgingly on his posterior, he stands up and recovers quickly, a barrage of punches follows at Apollo, he quick steps away, mimicking the movements to avoid the blows, Foux overextended his left arm with a jab, Apollo

counter punched him sharp that Foux spun to an acute angle and Apollo jumped and clotheslines Foux as he juttet forwards; this time he fell to the ground gasping for breath, after a few seconds he scorned “you son of a bitch!”, and stood up, Foux took a stance with his arms around his obliques, he clenched his fists to steady himself, this time; however, Foux took a strong defensive position, “come forth if you dare” he told in a much more serious tone than before. Apollo failing to realize the obvious bait, came running forward and sliding in a kick, Foux smirked and jumped landing on his Patella muscle. A sharp pain rode up Apollo’s leg, the pain hit his brain rapidly; he managed to escape out of Foux’s path. Apollo managed himself to his feet with a limp; Foux observing his action’s results stood there mocking Apollo, “looks like I didn’t completely disable your leg; I won’t make the same mistake twice; this is for keeps boy”, Apollo at first

starting to enrage in his mind and then for a brief moment a thought flickered in his head, *‘he wants me to get angry, so I will make a mistake thus I should assume he’s more desperate than he is letting on, I need to stay in a level headed sense of mind and if I can accomplish that, then I will win’* Foux approached closer and began throwing a barrage of punches, Apollo put up a cross block, then Foux started aiming for his leg kicking repeatedly with Apollo’s leg shaking, he decided to fake losing his footing so Foux leaned in for a finishing blow as he did Apollo grabbed his leg and pushed forward with his open palm and slammed Foux on his back to the ground there he wrapped his arm around Foux’s through and began choking him “do you give up!?” he inquired loudly. Foux remained silent, Apollo thinking that Foux would die let go of his grip when Foux raised his foot into Apollo’s privates, Apollo feel off in pain and Foux stood up, “hand

me a chain” he motioned to one of his men, the follower brought a 30 foot chain to Foux, “bring out a weapon, I am not here for an easy victory!” he yelled at Apollo; Apollo not sure what to do look around and then saw Yami out in the distance, “Yami, lend me the use your sword!” he shouted, Yami who had stayed silent now realized that this was a fight to the death, complied to the request by handing Apollo his sword, Apollo took a stance, holding the blade edged towards Foux. Foux grabbed the chain swinging it in the air; he snapped it at Apollo, the links grazed Apollo’s face, Foux pulled it back and aimed low this time, Apollo jumped over the length and once he landed dashed towards his opponent. Apollo swung sideways nonetheless Foux blocked the sharp edge with the hardened part of the chain link. Foux flicked the link one, two, three each time Apollo dodged, this repeated for some time when Foux faked going

high and went low raping the chain link around Apollo's weakened leg, Foux pushed to the side tripping Apollo, he then dragged Apollo towards him, he stabbed the blade into the ground to halt the dragging, Foux released the grip around Apollo's leg and wrapped it around the sword; Apollo attempted to resist, he locked the chain around the blade at an angle, he ran up and underhanded punched Apollo in the gut, Apollo resisted the damage, let go of the sword and sent a series of kicks at Foux, he used the chain to block, and tried to rip the blade from the earth, when he was unable to, he tried to rap Apollo around the train, Apollo avoided this, focused his energy and grabbed the sword out of the ground. At this point in the battle, there was a deadlock between Apollo and Foux, both were constrained by the chain, the user and the defendant. While the constraint existed, both tried to maneuver their weapon free, but it wouldn't budge, Foux

decided to drop the chain and Apollo dropped his sword; they returned back to close quarters combat. Due to the long duration of the combat, Foux's men began to get anxious, one of them reached out and yelled "boss! Do you require our assistance?", Foux looked back and stated "I'm having the time of my life; I'd rather die than to have help from others, if I lose, then you are to drop the matter of taking revenge on the challenger" Yami looked concerned towards Kwak, who sensing the tension in Yami told him "if anyone interferes than I will deal with them, there is nothing to fear; be patient young man." Yami Tenshi after some reflection replied "I hope things will work out". In the arena, Apollo realized that his stamina was draining decided to make the first move, he landed many attacks on Foux, Foux cross armed blocked the attacks and counterattacked with his own punches, this continued until Apollo missed a hook, Foux

grabbed his arm and twisted it behind Apollo's torso, he bent his arm back to dislocate the shoulder; Apollo winced in pain; he slid his leg behind Foux and escaped the grasp. It was too late, however; Apollo's arm was numb, he had difficulty trying to move it, never mind trying to punch with strength, because of this, Apollo used the arm for defense to the best of his ability, he managed to back Foux against a wall, when Foux's back hit the structure, Apollo reached out and grabbed Foux's face and he slammed his head into the material due to Foux became disoriented, Apollo ran back to the weapons, and grabbed his sword still stuck to the chain, this time he had both weapons in his possession, Apollo swiped the chain at Foux hitting his arm, Apollo then planted the blade into Foux's left foot; as the blood gushed out of the foot, he grabbed the chain link and wrapped it around Foux's neck against the wall of the structure, he

tore the blade from the damaged foot, taking the sword around Foux's head, after getting multiple layers wrapped around, he began to squeeze, Foux's face became pale, Apollo Ata then took the blade and pierced into Foux's chest cavity, from the wound; Foux began coughing up blood, Apollo looking into his eyes stated "it's time for you to return to the earth, may peace be with you as you degrade into ash, I shall give an offering for your safe journey" Foux now barely alive murmured "thank you..." and died. Apollo with severe damage to the right half of his body limp, as he returned to the Follower's prayer center, Foux's men looked onwards in disbelief, some began to get angry at the events and tried to march forward to avenge their leader when Kwak emerged from obscurity, "that will all, please don't sacrifice any more blood today, it is not necessary, be gone from this place" Foux's men out of respect for the shamin decided to

heed the advice, they removed the blade from Foux and handed it back to Apollo and carried the corpse back northward to their headquarters. Yami ran up to Apollo and congratulated him “that was an incredible battle, you did well”, Apollo looked at him with an unpleasant look in his eyes and returned to his room, Yami understood his pain and left him be, Kwak asked some members to tend to Apollo’s wounds, Yami approached Kwak, “do you have any further information to help us find where we need to go, that is the black site around here?”, “I think we do; moreover, there will be supplies granted for your assistance in taking care of Foux Hou, I do not condone violence, yet this battle was a significance of not just Apollo’s future but of our own, had he not won, then it is likely Foux Hou’s men would have at some period of time exterminated us all, take some time to recover

and we'll discuss this matter at a later time. "Yes, sir" Yami stated.

Chapter 9 Showtime

{9}

clap *clap* *clap* "Wake up now," announced a mysterious voice, Yami opened his eyes and sat up from his bed, he looked over to the figure near his bedside, "what is it?" asked Yami as he yawned. "It's Kwak, sorry for the early wake up, but I need to have a word with you," he stated. "Alright, please proceed with what you have to say" told Yami. "My contact has relayed to me that, you and your friend are under the radar of the local company overlords; because of that, tread lightly henceforth" Yami smirked and stated "we've gotten them where we want them, they may have someone important, so this journey doesn't end until we get him back" Kwak looked at Yami with a grin on his face, pulled out a note and handed it to Yami "here is some

information for you all to contact us after the escapade is finished; take care of yourself” and so, Yami and Apollo headed out they were waved off by the Followers of the Light and resumed their journey.

Back in Japan, Ash Kroft stays hidden

On the other side of the Korea Strait, in a solemn apartment, A recovered Ash Kroft sat in his chair in a dimly lit room reading a newspaper, “Headline: Enryo Sora clamps down on corruption, these are the following who are now facing charges...”, “what a joke...” murmured Ash Kroft under his breath, he began thinking about *‘this recovery was sooner than I expected, now just gotta wait for some more of the heat to die down, thinking back; that Hikari fellow was a good fighter, shame he got the wrong end of the lady luck’*, as he contemplated the thought, a knock echoed loudly off the door, **bang* *bang**

bang, Ash Kroft alerted by the visitors, took cover to the right side of his doorway and pulled out his knife from its holster, and demanded, “who's there?”, “we’d like to have a word, Mr. Kroft; I assure you that we mean no harm” stated an unfamiliar voice, Ash Kroft thought for a moment then asked “how many of you are out there?”, “just two, I swear” replied one of the voices. After some deliberation, Ash Kroft let in the strangers into his residence. “Thank you for your kindness, we’ll keep this visit brief” stated the voice and so they sat down, Ash Kroft followed suit. “How was the recovery?”, “it’s going better than expected” replied Ash Kroft suspicious, the man followed the question with “the reason why we are here is that there are new developments which are very notable; specifically, our plan is going faster than expected and so, we’d like to offer you a job in response”, “ it seems as if I’ve wasted your time,

I'm not interested in any more insane jobs in the meantime, rather my bank account is enjoying the last one, a set of wealth that I cannot fully take advantage of now due to current circumstances" told Ash Kroft, "oh, you misunderstood me, this job should be a piece of cake in comparison to the last one, we merely wish for you to be on standby for Enryo Sora, there may be some complications that need to be taken care of, non so brazen as before; tell you what, I will leave my card here, the pay is very good for what it entails, tell you what, why not give us a call if you are interested." and so the pair left out the door and shut it quietly. Ash Kroft stared at the card that the man had left on the table, he walked over and picked it up seeing that the contents of the card were a name written in morse and an unfamiliar successive code for the phone number, he went to his lock box under his bed, put it on his bed, unscrambled the lock

code and picked out various code manuals, he grabbed a few and began working, after trial and error he found some key books and contemplated while working on solving the code, after a significant subsequent amount of time he found the correct transcriber, *'hm, let me see prefix 0...2,...3..22...16.. h...o...d..ang ...x...e..m, 24, this code must be a set of foreign phrases.. Which language though?'*, Ash Kroft went to his bookshelf and pulled out various dictionaries, and after searching through many he found it, "the code must be Vietnamese, alright!" after placing his finger line by line he discovered the meaning, 'phone code area, come.. they.. are watching' ensuing in Ash Kroft's mind was more questions than answers, then an idea flashed in his mind *'if this is a code, then maybe.. just maybe there is more to this card than it seems,'* while Ash Kroft considered the messages' main purpose pulled out his pack of cigarettes and his lighter

and sparked the flint, as he lit his cigarette, he noticed that the message became darker between the lines, in these now visible lights he saw an address on the card “5th Boulevard and Yubinidoro Main”, off struck Ash Kroft mentioned, “wait...isn’t that..? ha-ha!”, Ash Kroft went to his phone and dialed his friend, “I need to call in a favor, I need a ride to this address undercover and then he read off the preceding address, be here in an hour” Ash Kroft prepared his belongings and walked outside to the waiting car.

In the forests of Korea, the duo found their destination

Apollo and Yami arrived at the Side 04 facility, there they found not a single worker was either working on equipment or harvesting the minerals, the nearby buildings appeared to have been abandoned to their perception “this is very

strange, careful Apollo there may be an ambush waiting for us” Yami forwarded to Apollo, “ no one would leave this much equipment abandoned around in the open, let’s see who they have in store for us” after a careful examination the pair didn’t find anything until they saw a live electrical spark at the end of one of the building complexes, Apollo noticed the phenomenon and stated, “I’ll go take a look” and so Apollo move in front of the wire and leaned over to get a closer look, “this is interesting.. This wire is live, there must be someone here,” just as Apollo’s statement arrived at Yami’s eardrums, Yami heard a loud **bang**; coming from nearby Apollo, realizing what was happening Yami shouted “look out!” as he ran towards Apollo, a large being broke through the wall running into Apollo, grasping him fiercely he charged into a further successive wall structures, **crash** **crash** **crash** when Apollo’s back had reached

the final blocking structure, the being moved so that Apollo's body broke through the structure and he fell on his back in an unconscious state from the resultant pain, above his lifeless body stood the assailant figure, from the distance the only phenotypic traits Yami could see were a wide smirk on his face, and the figure's considerable height stood above Apollo's unconscious state, the strange figure looked towards Yami Tenshi and announced in arrogance, "I made little work of your associate, it's your turn next," he announced; because of this, Yami's blood began to boil in rage, he put on a face of determination and unraveled his blade from his right side's sheath and took to his duel stance. The imposing individual turned his attention and marched over to the live electric wires the duo had seen earlier and grabbed the two links pieces, he wrestled them apart, exposing the copper wire and in each hand

allowed a voltage surge, to the observer, it looked as if his hands had an electric aura of electricity surrounding them, upon seeing this, Yami thought *'can't let him touch me; the voltage looks like it will kill an average man,'* when the figure let go of the exposed wires Yami Tenshi began his charging assault forward, rushing him head on, when he arrived in front of the target, he came down with his blade with a fierce strike diagonally downwards from the right, in response, the man blocked the attack with his charged fists gauntlets, he proceeded to counter punch towards Yami's torso, Yami deflected the blow feeling the residual spark in the blowback, afterwards the man announced in arrogance, "My name is Teiden, I'll be the server of justice this evening", after surveying the local surroundings, Yami glanced over at his opponent replying "just try it", Teiden motioned over to his right side and the remnants of what appeared to

Yami to be Foux's men emerged from obscurity, this time; however, to Yami's chagrin, they had on a suits marking their loyalty to the company, Teiden acknowledging the new force by stating, "we want him alive gentlemen, that is all for now" and thus forth, the men with Teiden surrounded Yami in the perimeter, one...two...three soldiers commenced their attack, Yami kept up his guard up taking reflective blows, Yami had his guard up from two of the strikes when Teiden jumped up and came down over Yami's head, Yami released his sword and withstood the two assaulted attacks and guarded against Teiden's fierce attack, as the blade clanged, it causes lots of friction thus, the follow-up aftershock caused a secondary shock to the combatants in the nearby area. The aftermath had awoken Apollo to his feet and once seeing the current fight transpiring, he angrily charged through the soldier's backs to the center of interest, "Don't worry now, i'm here

to save the day!” he yelled to Yami, Yami responded back, “yeah right, took you long enough, you fight leftwards, I’ll go right,” and so they proceeded to maneuver to the corresponding arenas while being chased by the goons. Out of the duo, Apollo this time emerged on a favorable terrain grounding, once he surveyed his opponents in regard to his own position, he ceased to run. Apollo noticed that the bulk of the enemies had chosen to pursue Yami; because of this, Apollo got frustrated and stated “you don’t think I am a threat? Fine, I’ll show you a unique kind of pain, bring it on!”. Apollo’s opponents rushed him in a legion style formation, since Apollo wasn’t carrying a weapon, he sidestepped the piecing attacks, at the same time, he noticed a few of the soldiers were slower in their attacks compared to the rest so he targeted them, when the fateful few soldiers struck, he jumped on one of their blades

using his weight to gravitate them to fall downwards, using the weak leverage, he jumped above two of the attackers and side kicked them in the head, causing a chain reaction of falling adversaries around the line formation. Apollo proceeded to grab one of the spears from the fallen soldiers and rushed back to gain the better terrain advantage, the squadron recovered and resumed the attack. On the opposite sector of the Side 04's grid, Yami Tenshi squared off against numerous enemies, as with Apollo they completely surrounded him in a perimeter, Yami braced himself in a defensive posturing. The soldiers coordinated their attacks to try to take down Yami's guard. Left... no!...Right! He anticipated the movements, **clank**, **clank**, as the weapons collided against the blade, in their second attempt, when the soldiers charged at Yami, Yami dodged the first two attacks, for the third strike, Yami bent his knees and grabbed the

soldier and twisted his body to throw him over counter clockwise to the ground, when the fourth soldier, Yami drew his sword horizontal slicing his thighs open, before the blood could finish spurting out; Yami maneuvered rightwards and decapitated one of the attackers then promptly pierced another in his torso; as the soldier collapsed; Teiden approached from behind Yami and grabbed Yami and lifted him up by his armpits, once Teiden accomplished this, the remaining soldiers began striking Yami continually as Yami became more and more covered in blood; he lost his remaining energy and strength left to escape, when the fight left him, Teiden dropped him and then proceeded to kick him, he flew with incredible velocity impacting a nearby wall structure, Yami laid still while Teiden approached, as Apollo's fight came to a standstill, he just happened to notice from a distance that Yami was getting the crap beaten

out of him; *‘oh... this isn’t good, I should try to help him’* and so, he began gyrating the spear that he grabbed from the fallen soldier’s corpse, and barged through his enemies running towards Yami, Teiden noticed the raid and thus moved to intercept Apollo, Apollo rerouted and attacked Teiden, Teiden raised his gauntlet up for defense, Apollo’s spear was deflected by a charge composed of electrical energy, Apollo once deflected, leaned his body over and used the spear to propel himself forward, he used the resultant momentum to jettison himself from the area, over towards Yami’s unconscious state, Apollo kneeled over and shook Yami, “wake up! No time to sleep now!”; despite the pain, Yami regained some strength and witnessed Teiden strike Apollo’s back, Apollo crashed into the wall face first, and after he recovered, turned around and yelled “alright, now I’m going to kill you!” hearing this, Teiden smirked and stated “you

might have killed Foux but I'm on a whole different level", Apollo walked over to Yami and lent his hand out to Yami and Yami stood up shaking, but still grasped his blade, he planted it in front of him standing firm, "I'm alright, we are going to get Hikari back, we've haven't come this far to only come this far!", Yami and Apollo simultaneously attack Teiden, through the strikes Teiden received the blows when Apollo glanced at Yami and thus Yami jumped up, slamming his blade down towards Teiden's cranium, Teiden responded by blocking the strike with both fists; this left the rest of his body vulnerable, Apollo seeing this, took advantage and focused his energy into his fists and released a barrage of fist strikes into Teiden's stomach; in pain, Teiden lowered his arms, Apollo grabbed his left arm throwing him to the ground still holding on to it, Apollo rearranged his position to break Teiden's arm with a lock, seeing the current events

transpire, the soldiers rushed the duo, but not before Apollo snapped his arm; afterwards, the duo moved to the defensive, Teiden recovered to his feet, and yelled; he reached for his arm and attempted to relocate the bones; afterwards, he charged his gauntlets; furthermore, then he went straight towards Apollo, Teiden bent over and picked Apollo up and flipped him over his back, Teiden turned around as the soldiers blocked Yami, and Teiden lifted Apollo off the ground by his feet; as Apollo struggled, Teiden grasped his face violently and began sending electric shocks through his body, in excruciating agony, Apollo tried to fight back; however, he was trapped; as he lost his will, Teiden kept hold and carried him towards the edge of the mountain's path; it stood above the sharp landscape at an ominous altitude; Yami saw events unfolding and kept on struggling to break through the soldier's defenses without success, Yami began to feel light headed,

he instinctively sheaved his blade into its case and then as the soldiers tried to apprehend him, he unmistakably unleashed an unfathomable energy that stopped the attackers stone cold, afterwards not understanding why they weren't moving, Yami continued dashing towards Teiden; as Teiden watched Yami approaching him, he let go of Apollo, once Apollo had hit the ground, Yami struck Teiden with such energy that it severed Teiden's arm clean off, Teiden shocked yet reacted apace, he pounced on the opening and grabbed Yami's forearm, where he electrocuted him, Yami Tenshi over time passed out from the pain; Teiden stood there horrified by what he had just seen, he grasped his arm to sever off the bleeding; doing so by frying his cells to seal the wound; he then tried to pick up the severed arm; however, as he reached for it, the arm began to disintegrate into atoms, without thinking he went to Apollo and kicked him off the

edge of the mountainous path, Teiden grabbed Yami's unconscious body and carried him into one of Side 04's office buildings, he picked up the phone and dialed the council informant's number, "hello, yes the mission is complete, the prisoner is in custody; however, I need some medical attention send a group over here" stated Teiden and he hung up the phone. After some time passed, a plane arrived at the site with many council members departing, Ringo Kane rushes to Teiden with an escapade of medics to tend to his wounds, "this was a hell of a job" Ringo began, "yes, it was" replied Teiden, "so where are the other soldiers?" asked Ringo, "they must have been incapacitated otherwise they would have be here already; I shouldn't have sent Foux out there to intercept them, one knows to never send an amateur to do a professional's job" told Teiden, "oh yes, that one... well the higher ups don't mind to have rid themselves of

individuals like that, after all they are just pawns in the game” stated Ringo, “hm..” Teiden mumbled, “Ringo, your orders are now to deliver the prisoner to Star and Shiloh personally” told Teiden, “why would that be, shouldn’t you be the one to accept the praise?” asked Ringo. “It is because, they are satisfied with my work, I was told that in the circumstance that I am not in condition to travel that I should not” Teiden pulled a note from his pocket, “here is the address information to get to the drop off” Teiden hands the paper to Ringo, “don’t be long now” he stated grumpily; in the aftermath, Council members tried to tend to the incapacitated soldiers; however, they were as if they had no longer been a part of this world, the members helped the survivors bury the dead and started reconstruction.

In a small village, the river flows downstream

In the following days, a lone fisherman was fishing for lunch when he saw a young man floating down the river's stream, he dropped the fishing rod and ran over to Apollo and dragged him out of the water, once done he rushed back to the village to get help, as he was doing this, Apollo seeing through a haze, looked up to the sky wondering '*had it all been a dream*', and passed out once again. Due to Apollo's condition, he would remain in a coma for the remained of the week.

Back in Japan, one part of the mission ends

In Japanese territory, a Cessna 172 flew uninspired overhead, through the clouds the lone pilot saw a plane in the distance; he leaned forward and adjusted his goggles to see whose aircraft it was, he murmured "an ambiguous council plane.. Very familiar" and so he decided to tail the aircraft from a distance. After two

hours, the plane had reached Yashiharou and landed on a main plot, the lone pilot decided to land on a small airfield near Tofu's shop; from inside the shop, Tofu heard the aircraft make a landing so he walked out of his shop to meet the traveler, "welcome back, my friend did you have success on your journey?" he inquired, "I didn't find it, yet it was a much more exciting than I have time to explain; therefore, I'll inform you about it at a later time," stated the pilot "at least you tried, welcome home Genso", "much appreciated" Genso replied, Genso Tenshi and Tofu returned back to the shop, once inside they heard an announcement starting over the radio, it began with "This is Yashiharou Radio, on today's report, we have breaking news from our great saviour, the Council; they have relied that further information has been gathered regarding the Arata Unmei case, according to the report, Hikari Ata, the man who was standing trial for

the murder has been apprehended along with a suspected accomplice to the deed;however, due to the nature of the investigation, this accomplice identity is being hidden from the public, as a means of security; in accordance, further judgement will be handed down this afternoon in a timely manner, as Hikari Ata will be presented to the public, that's all for the major news this afternoon, Jay Okyobu signing off.” Tofu looked at Genso and stated “something must have happened to Yami and Apollo for the council to show its hand, we should go to this public exhibition” stated Tofu, “alright, I'll gather the rest of the team to head down” and so they went to perform their respected duty. At the Yashiharou plaza, a crowd was gathered around waiting for the announcement, eventually Kasumi Masato emerged from behind the stage, following her were bodyguards who brought out Hikari, at first glance, the Ata family and their

associates immediately saw Hikari's state, he stood there with a downtrodden appearance, shackled both in his hands and feet, he looked as if he lost a considerable amount of weight and his face appeared with tired eyes and a pale deposition; Kasumi Masato approached a microphone, announcing "citizens at Yashiharou, today we present to you Hikari Ata, there wasn't a response from the crowd, "now we will answer questions that we have prepared and so, "do you admit you were involved in the Arata Unmei assassination?", Hikari approached the microphone "I was there, but I was trying to help out," Kasumi Masato interrupted him "hold your tongue, a person doesn't run when they are innocent", "I didn't run, I was taken", "alright then, who was responsible?", "I'm not sure, I didn't see their faces", "how convenient; regardless, a special investigation will decide your fate in a weeks time, justice must prevail in

this nation”; “I’m not guilty!” told Hikari Ata as the guards grabbed him from the mic and thus led him back behind the curtains. “The circumstances of the previous trial dictate that the following be conducted under the auspices of the military, the final decision will be determined one week from now, that is all.”, and so she walked away from the podium of the platform, Sola Ata stood among friends and wept with a smile on her face *‘my son is alive’*.

Chapter 10 Encore

{10}

Yami Tenshi sat in silence in a security vehicle waiting for the end of Masato’s announcement; he sat there thinking *‘why am I still alive?... that man could have killed me without issue... what happened back there?..’*, before he could continue, the guards opened the passenger door and stepped in, they grabbed him

and blindfolded him, “stay quiet, make a sound and we are going to have problems,” he stated in a tone that though blind, Yami could feel the arrogance. The driver started the engine and began driving towards a private airport, the luggage and passengers boarded the plane and took off; Yami looked on the best he could while blindfold; he asked “where are we going?”, “there is a location where the deities lay, they wish to bring further wisdom to the world by unlocking the truth” stated one of the men, Yami took a few moments to register the statement and once he did had a flashback to his dreams, *‘there is a chest on one of the islands off the shore of Japan, it contains a very inquisitive material that cannot be replicated by just anyone, legend says that if you can access it, then you can get a special ability that allows for even manipulating of reality and you are going to assist us with your potential’; like hell I’ll cooperate, need to find a way to get back up”*

*Uncertainty roamed the
landscape*

At Yashiharou plaza, Genso Tenshi's mind raced '*Dr. Kaufspalding is waiting for me, I need to tell him what I found*' so he walked over to the intersection, waiting for the guards to move and then made his way to the science institute on foot; when he arrived in Kaufspalding's office, he knocked on the door and the door creaked open; inside the building Genso saw equipment smashed all around the lab, chemicals of unknown properties spread out on the floor, papers burning inside an incinerator, most of the furniture was turned over with broken legs, in the corner laid against the wall was the professor, he had blood covering his lab coat and his glasses lay on his face broken; Professor Kaufspalding's face was pale with swollen cheeks and disoriented eyes; Genso ran over to him, "professor! What happened here?" he yelled,

there was a mumbled response from the professor, “listen!, I’m going to take you to the hospital” and so Genso picked up the professor and carried him on his shoulders, he walked some blocks until he found another person and asked for help, the civilian went to the phone booth and called an ambulance to take him to the hospital, when the vehicle came Genso insisted on traveling with him in which the paramedics complied. Once Genso and Kaufspalding arrived at the hospital, a team of medical professionals took in the professor for surgery, past the doors of the emergency room, Genso made his way to a payphone, he dialed Tofu’s shop, “hello? Tofu I need to have a word with you, come over to the hospital when possible”, Tofu was sitting at a table speaking with Nic Hiroshi when he was interrupted; “the hospital?, who is in trouble?” asked Tofu on the phone, “I don’t have enough time to explain, all you need to know is that its

related to the mission and this person is in real danger” and so Genso hung up the line. Tofu grabbed his keys and mentioned to Nic Hiroshi that Genso needed help, Tofu rushed over to the hospital with Nic Hiroshi, inside the first floor lobby Genso waited for them. “Hello, Genso how are you, so who is our patient?” asked Tofu, “the patient is Dr. Kaufspalding, he’s in bad shape so he is in surgery right now,” stated Genso; in response, a shiver went down Tofu’s spine, Tofu didn’t respond; Genso followed up, “are you feeling alright?”, “it’s nothing... we should go upstairs and wait for more information” told Tofu, before they left Genso mentioned to Nic, “are you doing better?” he asked, “I think so, I’ve mostly recovered from my injuries” stated Nic. “Glad to hear it” told Genso, and they went up the side staircase to the emergency room. After some time passed, a doctor emerged from the operating room, “excuse me, which one of you

gentlemen is Genso Tenshi?”, “my name is Genso sir,” Genso replied, standing from a waiting room chair, “I know this may be particular;however, our patient here demanded that we hand you this note, he was insistent that he have a pen to write it down, I haven’t looked at the contents..” the doctor handed the note over to Genso and walked passed the group wiping sweat from his forehead. Genso opened the note and its contents were a name and a phone number scribbled sloppily; seeing this he showed it over to Nic and Tofu, Nic looked at it with surprise and stated “judging from the area code, this must be a foreign number, let me think... Oh yes, this is from Vulbeak; I recognize the number since I’ve had business in the area before.” “oh, a collect call;here Genso take my car back to the shop, inside my telephone is part of a subscription that includes many foreign nations” therefore he handed the keys over to Genso. Genso made his

way to the parking lot and noticed a large military presence moving at nearby structures, he got in the vehicle, started the engine and drove off in the opposite direction to the shop. When Genso made it to the shop, he hurried and unlocked the door and went to the telephone and dialed the number from the note “hello, is this The Followers of Light? , I’m looking for a man named Kwak Hwan Seung” “okay.. Please hold,after a minuted someone grabbed the line, “Hello? This is Kwak Seung, who am I speaking to?”; “my name is Genso Tenshi, I was recently given a note and told to call this number, unfortunately, my friend seemed to be urgent that I call you; yet I’m not sure why”; “that’s alright, who is your friend?” asked Kwak, “his name is Dr. Kaufspalding”, “Kaufspalding... ah yes, very good; I suppose he told you to call me because someone you know is actually present in the settlement, surely you know Apollo Ata?”,

Genso's face light up in surprise, "yes, he is a close associate", "very good, the members and I are working to send him across the strait to you all; he should be there shortly in Yashiharou"

Kwak replied; "that's all well and good;however, Apollo may be in danger; therefore, he may need someone to accompany him", told Genso Tenshi; there was a pause on the phone, "don't concern yourself, two others and I will accompany him on the round trip; he's still recovering from his injuries, but he's in stable condition" stated Kwak, "I'll need to ask you about the situation later, thank you" and so Genso hung up the phone, once he did, he turned around and walked towards the door, midway he heard a few noises in the nearby room; he went to a nearby wall and braced it; he pulled out one of his cards and threw one in the doorway; as it hit the ground the noise alerted the intruders; one charged the doorway wearing a mask; the figure

looked confused when Genso slugged him in the face, Genso managed to pin him to the wall, the other intruders rushed Genso, in response, Genso pulled out a utility knife and impaled it into the pinned man's leg; the man yelped and fell over in pain; Genso quickly braced for the attacks from the menaces, once struck, Genso rushed forward and side stepped right to an open area in the shop, he pivoted on his foot and rolled into another area to avoid attacks, using this timing as a breakpoint, he bolted towards the door; slammed it open and ran out of Tofu's shop; the goons followed him in a chase into the far distance.

At a site of holy rituals, a
scheme is crafted

On the opposite side of Yashiharou, Ash Kroft arrived at the Cathedral from the summoning, a group of monks led his car into the property's mysterious road, once parked, Ash

Kroft was led into the Cathedral, inside the building Bishop Reinhardt greeted him, “welcome, I’m glad to see that you’ve made it here safely, now there is little time to waste, shall we get started with the business at hand?, take a seat lad”, “that would be an acceptable arrangement” stated Kroft and he took to a seat in the meeting room, “Johan close the curtains if you would”, “yes Father,” replied Johan, after the action completed the Bishop began, “this world sure is something, sometimes we are fighting against nations, other times we are fighting among ourselves, quite something, isn’t it?”, “I’m not much of a ‘we’ type, I leave that for the scholars” replied Ash Kroft, “experience is the gift the Lord bestows on us, it shapes us in the intended image; yet, there are times where a correction is needed, this is one of those times; we are involved in a strategy and we need good men for the tactical aspects of the operation;

that's where you would come in, and in exchange for this service, we have an offer for you", "I'm listening, please continue Father" stated Ash Kroft, "to put it frank, you are a marked man, one who is one misstep from an early grave; however, the church is also in an unfortunate circumstance, we've done acceptable up to this point, yet one thing history has shown us is that when heads start rolling then no one is immune therefore, we want you to lead part of the revolution" stated the Bishop, "it's hard for me to speak negative to someone who wishes me to lead men; nonetheless, why do you think that I am capable of such a feat, after all, I'm not sure, I don't understand how you got my information", Bishop Reinhardt smirked and after a few moments spoke up "we may be men of the church, but we do have voices that inform us of the goings on of the outside, you were the one to kill the mayor, regardless, a sinner is able to

redeem themselves by doing the good deeds, the council needs to be disposed, they are a much greater evil in this world” hearing this, Ash Kroft looked down, swore under his breath and stared at the surrounding monks, thinking for some moments he finally spoke up, “there is common ground here, what do you wish for me to do?”

The pilgrims arrived in the afternoon

Apollo Ata arrived at the beachhead at 12 o'clock sharp, he was greeted by the group in waiting “welcome Apollo!, long time no see!” announced Genso, “welcome!” followed the rest of the group, “it feels good to be back, I hope I haven’t been too much of a burden on your thoughts” replied Apollo. Apollo approached the crowd and continued onwards among a scene of celebration, when the group arrived at the meeting area of Tofu’s shop, they were met by a man standing at the front door, “hello everyone”

he stated with a cheerful smile, “may I have a moment of your time?” he asked reserved; the group looked at him and Kurai Tenshi stated “very well, please come inside our establishment”, he lead the way inside, Tofu walked over to the equipment closet and pulled out a medium sized table and sets of chairs so that everyone would have a seat at the table. The stranger began with “let me begin by inquiring of the experiences of our latest arrival, Apollo would you tell us about your expedition in Vulbaek?”, Apollo cleared his throat and asked “what would you like to know?”, “information about the Council’s ability, from what I understand, you and your friend Yami Tenshi went to search for Hikari Ata’s whereabouts and considering your condition and arrival, there must be a formidable occurrence happening” stated the stranger, “ There isn’t much for me to explain, we came into contact with Council

affiliated soldiers on the way to this site, a place where we thought Hikari might be at..." Apollo trailed off and then continued "I faced off against one of the men in combat, and I defeated him, later we approached his boss and fought, both Yami and I lost, yet there was something strange about the fight I suppose", "what would that be?" asked the stranger, "there was an energy that Yami and I were able to use during the combat, and well Yami's power was very strong, I witnessed him shock hardened soldiers to a stand still and he severed Teiden's arm off, not only that, the arm just disintegrated afterwards," The rest of the group sat in the circle shocked over what Apollo was saying. The stranger had a look of happiness on his face, "very good, such abilities will bolster our strength, now to the matter of importance, here is the plan we've come up with to fight back"

Amongst a mist, the guest of
honor arrives

At a far away location, Yami Tenshi and his guards arrived at a manner surrounded by a deep fog. Once Yami was led out of the plane, he looked around at the landscape, it had just rained so the grass had a shiny dew on it, and the ground was covered in mud; its content covered parts of the path, as Yami walked towards the entrance, he thought to himself, *‘for such a nice manor, there gardening needs some work...’*, The guards led him inside the giant doors into a bright light emitted from its mysterious premise. “Welcome to our home, we’ve been expecting you” told the two celestial beings sitting in their superannuated cathedra. “It appears to have been a long time since our last encounter, tell me what, I may do for your liege, this fine evening?” asked Yami Tenshi; “We will ignore your impotence for the moment; now, you’ve had time

to mule over our proposition, given the circumstances, the logical course of action would be to do what we demand, after all, what other choice do you have?, we want the treasure of Peng Kane to be released to the world, if you oblige our demand then you may return to normality along with your friends; if not then the consequences will be ample punishment, it's a one sided decision really” stated the two deities waiting, “I need time for deliberation, please; if you give me time to collect myself, then I will give you my final answer”, “this is acceptable, guards take Mr. Tenshi to the holding chamber until he has reached a decision, until then stand guard to prevent any mischievousness”; the guards obliged and led Yami Tenshi to a large room that appeared to him as if it were an old dining room. The room’s, chandelier immediately stood out to Yami, as the crystals swung in the air, the light bulbs illuminated above showing the

large table in the center, Yami approached the middle of the table and took a seat to contemplate the next move of his. Meanwhile, back at Tofu's shop the group finalize their plans. First the decision was made to rescue Hikari Ata from the Council's grasp, on the queue the Cathedral mobilized its prepared forces and allies to make its move into Yashiharou square, the citizens saw the members maneuvering throughout the buildings and hurried inside, shuttering the windows and doors. In silence, the Council's men were taken out until the stealth squads approached a mass of soldiers who raised their weapons and began firing. Gunshots rang throughout the air impacting buildings where each side took cover, as they fought for the territory, a squad composed of Apollo, Eis, Genso, Kurai and Tofu made their way through to the militaries' holding facility; there they found soldiers rushing outwards to combat the rebels

or to even join them; after waiting for the right opportunity; the group finally made their way to the holding cell where they thought Hikari Ata would be located. “Hikari, where are you?” asked Apollo while he tried to moderate his voice... he received no answer so the group progressed forward and made their way up to the next level; Apollo and the group kept searching until they reached a cell at the very end and saw Hikari laying against the wall of his prison cell. “Hikari? Wake up! We are going to get you out of here!” announced Apollo, Hikari looked up at his brother and asked “whose this, who are you all?”, Genso spoke, “We’re your friends, there is chaos in the streets; multiple factions are trying to fight for control so we decided to bust you out of here”, Hikari rubbed his eyes and replied “oh!, sorry everyone, my vision is sort of messed up; I’ve been in the dark for far too long”, the group proceeded to pull out a welding set and began

melting the bars, once mendleable the group rushed inside and Apollo and Genso carried Hikari out of the cell and then they maneuvered outside to a waiting car; Nic Hiroshi rolled down the window of the passenger side and stated, “heard you needed a lift” and the group rushed into the vehicle. Nic looked back to the back seat of the vehicle, “I’ve received word about Yami’s whereabouts, it will take us two days to arrive there”; “where are we going?” asked Apollo. Nic pulled out a map from his pocket and pointed at the spot, Genso looked at the map and inquired “are you sure that it's there?”, “absolutely” replied Nic and he turned around to look onward.

In the holding chamber, Yami Tenshi sat at the table contemplating his answer to the lingering question when there was a loud knock on the door and a following announcement “Mr. Tenshi, you are summoned forthright,” Yami

Tenshi approached the door and stepped out to the guards, he walked to the main floor with an omnipotent Star and Shiloh awaiting him, “we’ve decided to grant you two days to make your decision, after that if you do not tell us your answer, then punishment will be delivered, it seems like your friends are trying to make their way towards us, since we find this defiance amusing, we shall let them come and try to rescue you; however, let it be known that no mercy will be shown to those who are no use to use, that is all be gone for now....”, without much time for Yami to consider the speech, he was brought back to his chamber. After 36 hours, the group made it to Star and Shiloh’s lair, there they were met by the guardians of the lands, “halt heathens of the realm, you shall not progress forthright, if you disobey, then you shall die,” stated one of the leading men, “fuck you!” yelled Nic and the car drifted to the side to provide the

group cover, the guards wielding their swords and spears charged at the group, Genso takes point and unleashes a steam turbine weapon, sending some members flying back into the walls of the manor, more charged at the group, gunfire erupted from the group's side, one of the guards flanked Kurai Tenshi; in response, he drew a blade and clashed with the angry demon, the rest of the group saw this and tried to help Kurai, yet Kurai shouted to the rest of them, "don't worry about us, Tofu and I will take these guys," and so; the rest progressed forwards. Apollo, Eis, Hikari and Genso burst through the main doors into the large endless hallway, some servants moved to avoid the running trio as they progressed forwards, Yami hearing the ruckus, shouted "I'm here, it's Yami; as Apollo ran by he heard the voice and after taking some corners, he made it to the location where Yami was staying, two guards tried to stop the group; however, Apollo

concentrated his fist and punched holes through the two men after a brief fight; he broke the padlock on the door and Yami was there handcuffed sitting at the table, Apollo broke the handcuffs and the quadrant group ran out, they ran towards the inside of the manor since the front was hectic, once inside; the lights turned off quickly and horrifically. “You’ve left us no choice Star and Shiloh started simultaneously, we will force you to open Peng Kane’s chest, make our words. Apollo looked at the deities and shouted, “you’re not going to force him to do anything, you have no right and we’d rather die than see our friend be forced to help you!”, “don’t test us boy!” shouted Star and Star flung a piece of concrete at Apollo, he charged his right hand and shattered the attack as it came at him, Apollo charged the floating deities and tried to strike them;however, they parried his attack as they came, “is that all you have to offer” taunted Shiloh to Apollo and

she charged him and rapidly grabbed his face, and flung him while dragging him along the ground, Genso tried to flank her, but she raised her left arm and shot forcefully blasts at him, Genso countered by revving up his steam engine on his arm, the hot steam dissipated the attacks towards him. Genso gritted his teeth and charged towards Shiloh, his charged power slammed her in the face, after a moment of hesitation, her eyes grew intense, she made her way towards Genso, grabbed his arm and flung him across the room, when he impacted the wall, Eis and Genso spread to opposite sides and launched their attack on Shiloh, Star maneuvered inward and blocked Eis, Star pulled a dagger out and sliced Eis's face across the right cheek, Genso seeing this got enraged and operated by punching Star with a steam readied fist, she staggered back slightly, "tsk" and Star threw her arms downward to unleash a greater ability, Genso backtracked to

avoid the power, he braced himself as a second wave of power was unleashed; Star charged him with the blade in hand, Genso blocked the assault with the steam aura, it repulsed her attack due to the heat, after this the group of four regrouped together while Star and Shiloh prepared the next attacks, Apollo looked over to Yami, “ready?”

Chapter 11 Glory

{11}

Apollo and Yami sprinted towards Star’s flanks and at the same time, attacked both of her flanks. Star threw her arms outstretched upwards, releasing a fierce blast throwing the two attackers back to the sides, Genso charged while she was distracted and impaled her with a piercing blade; Star looked at him and then smirked, saying “nice try you fool”, and she pulled out the blade as blood gushed out and she lifted Genso up in the air and flung him into a

nearby wall. Apollo recovered first, following his attack with energy emanating from his fists, Shiloh maneuvered in front of Shiloh and blocked Apollo's attack, Star moved to try to slash Apollo, Yami moved to block the attack with his blade. The clashing of the blades sparked a flame that spread through the room, the rescuers moved to dodge the heat enveloping the fine wares of the manor's arena. As the flames blazed, the group scattered around both avoiding the flames and the deities attacks. As the battle continued, the guards of the manor began to regroup around the entrance, they struck the doors, banging on the doors trying to defend their masters. Kurai and Tofu took advantage of their distraction and struck them from behind, Tofu shot the cannon they prepared, shredding some of the men apart, the guardians ceased their assault and moved to finish off the attackers on their immediate flank. Kurai and Tofu moved

back into their garrisoned cover. The distraction gave the pentarchy a chance to make a strategium, Yami looked at the four others and motioned “since these beings are mostly indestructible, our best chance is to try to immobilize one of them and make a strong attack towards the other; we can’t fight against both simultaneously and win against the two of them at the same time”, “sounds good to me” Apollo motioned and the rest agreed. Shiloh stood there seeing the attackers charging at her, she took a defense position, yet this time, all of the opponents struck at her, the first three attacks were blocked, but the remaining two landed on her head on, she tried to escape backwards; however, the three who were blocked, moved to her left side and impaled her, the remaining two stabbed her from the right side, the amount of damage inflicted made Shiloh lean forward in agony, and she was disabled for the time being.

Star witnessing the attack became startled and tried to send bursts of energy towards Shiloh; yet, Yami Tenshi blocked the attacks, the remainder of the group turned from the staggering Shiloh and charged Star in the distance, Star raised barriers on each side of her body, when the group attacked concurrently; Star released an energy burst flinging them back against the mannor's walls. As Yami recovered from the attack, he began remembering *"that battle against Teiden, how do I use that power again..."* before he could continue his thoughts, Star charged Eis and lifted her in the air, as she dangled her feet in the air; Star let go of her and struck her with a powered up palm, the force of the attack pierced through the entirety of Eis's body. Eis Hiroshi fell to the ground and grasped the open wound screaming in intense agony, Star stood over her fettle positioned body to grant her final judgement when Yami accelerated to a

position in front of Star, in shock, Star feigned a responsive dodge when Yami impaled her, Star fell to her knees and with tremendous might, Yami swung his blade horizontal, decapitating her. Star's head laid on the left side of her motionless body as it fell to the ground. Shiloh seeing her fallen comrade, rushed to her sister's aid when Apollo and Genso blocked her path, "just try it" stated Apollo in great confidence, Shiloh obliged them by releasing energy forcing Apollo and Genso out of the way, Yami stood next to Eis's body, he clenched the sheath of his sword, while the veins on his fists expunged anger, as Eis laid there still, her voice had dwindled down to a whimper as her face grew more pale. Shiloh raised an energy field during the distraction, in which, she began slowly healing Star, the opening in the chest cavity in Star's body began repairing its skin tissue back to a normal state, when the wound finished healing, the headless deity's body

stood up and walked to her head lying on the side, she picked it up and gently reattached it to the spinal cord; as this transpired; the fighters looked aghast at the sudden recovery, Behind the battle zone, some of the sister's guards broke through the blocked doors; they rushed inside and surrounded Apollo, Genso and Yami; Tofu and Kurai managed to follow the intruders and managed their way to the three standing fighters in the center; Tofu looked at his colleagues and announced "sorry, for this mess we have here, we did the best we could"; in rapid succession, the guards moved to close the gap between their enemy, Genso flung his cards at the upcoming attacker's limbs; yet there were too many of them to handle so, Genso took an onslaught of attacks, he managed to block most of the damage; yet, the cumulative damage was wearing Genso's stamina down, Apollo punched his way forward to assist Genso, Kurai pulled out a few oil canisters and

ignited a few Molotov cocktails and flung them at the guards, the fire gave the group time to focus on the sister's wraith; however, Shiloh saw an opening and went for Genso, she attacked Genso's left arm socket that it began tearing until Apollo intervened, Yami seeing his brother in trouble marched over to him, cutting some of the attacking guards down, because he was distracted, Star grabbed him from behind and lifted him up in the air, she squeezed his shoulders, crushing him slowly; in response, Yami relaxed his mind from the pain, and when Apollo broke Yami free from her grasp, Yami squatted and sliced diagonally at the descending Star, the wounds pushed her back away from him, Yami broke to the right and once at the center, he focused his mind, and sliced the air open, the attack opened a rift in the space time; Yami yelled to his friends "now is your chance!"; Hikari Ata emerged from the shadows and

grabbed Star, he joined up with Apollo and flung star into the ripple opening; Star didn't give up easily and she stuck her hand out from the other side of the newly created opening, she screamed to her sister "Shiloh!, help me!"; hearing this Shiloh reacted by rushing to try to grab her sister from the realm, Hikari moved to push Star fully through, when Shiloh grabbed his arm; holding him back; Hikari yelled to the group, "I'm sorry everyone, but I know what my duty is, please let me fulfill it" Apollo reacted to his words by yelling "you asshole! Trying to take all the glory for yourself!", Shiloh screamed in anger at the events and began attacking Hikari; as the blood spat out of his mouth, Apollo charged his fists to go and an exhausted Yami charged at Shiloh; they rammed the sister and Hikari into the realm; before Hikari completely left, he yelled "i'll survive this, see you later!" and then he disappeared. Once the deities left, the guards of

Star and Shiloh, fell to the ground; even their armor began to erase from existence, Apollo and Yami looked at each other and then ran over to their wounded friends. Yami carried Genso on his back and the others carried a weak Eis out of the manner.

The Great Battle has
ended

In the aftermath of the great battle for Yami Tenshi, the conflict continued in Yashiharou between Citadel backed rebel forces and Enryo Forces, due to fighting, the group stayed in Tofu's shop, while healthcare professionals nursed Genso and Eis back to health; although, Genso's injuries were sever, he soon was able to recover from his injuries in short order; Eis Hiroshi on the other hand, was still in critical condition lying still in a cot, Yami watched her unconscious state, hopeful that she would recover Apollo approached Yami and took him away from the

others to the side and mentioned, “I’ve made a decision; I am going to sail across the strait to continue training with Kwak in the temple complex; there is a lot for me to learn over these coming years and I want to be able to do what I can to bring back my brother, please don’t tell anyone about this until I’m gone; they’ll inevitably want me to stay, especially my mother”; Yami smiled and told “we’ve been through a lot, fought many enemies on our journey; I trust your judgement in this manner” replied Yami, “And, I have my own plans to consider” continued Yami. “Thank you,” stated Apollo and he bowed to Yami and left Tofu’s shop through the chaos of Yashiharou.

Intermission

After some days passed; Yami told the group about Apollo’s actions; their reactions varied from outright shock to understanding,

Tofu spoke up and stated “Apollo has been through a lot of tribulations, I’m glad to hear he has a new path in front of him; we must be careful around Sola; though, she will be upset at first.” Kurai Tenshi walked over to Tofu and stated “I’ll talk to Sola Ata; there was never any delusion of what dangers were there; even as Helios and I flew, she stayed tough; sola is after all, a strong character.” stated Kurai yanking his collar, then he continued, “speaking of strong characters, I forgot to mention that Artesia Valentine will be returning to us soon” Kurai told the group; Yami hearing his father’s words began to contemplate, and after a few moments he responded with, “I can’t wait to see her,” in a stoic manner. “Yes, my son; it’s been a long time hasn’t it?, alright; I have around a week to prepare; I hope to see you all at the welcome party” told Kurai, and he left Tofu’s shop. Once Kurai left, Tofu looked at the others and stated

“I’m going to grab some supplies from town; I’ll return as soon as possible.” when he was acknowledged, he walked out to the back and grabbed his motorcycle and sped off towards the plaza. When Tofu arrived at the markets, he noticed a woman in the distance surrounded by a few men, she tried to move away from them but from Tofu’s perspective, it looked like she was being harassed; he sped his bike over to help here, bothering some of the people in the streets, he drifted the bike to the side and saw up close that the woman was Sola Ata; the men around her were cornering her in an alleyway to him, they looked to be Council soldiers, Tofu stood behind them and shouted “What are you doing!? Leave her alone!”, the soldiers turned around and looked at him stating in a cold voice, “this doesn’t concern you citizen, move along now!”, Sola moved to run around the soldiers when one of them grabbed her by her hair, she began

screaming in pain; Tofu pulled out a wrench from his pocket and flung it at the man's neck, the impact of the metal pushed into his neck and began suffocating him, Tofu ran up and unsheathed the injured soldier's gun, pointing the gun at the remaining attacker, for an instance, the soldier who held up Sola let go of his grasp and she turned around and kicked him in the nuts, he fell over in agony, Tofu walked up to the soldier and grabbed him by collar and held him up by the wall, he pointed the handgun in the man's face, and stated "you are going to leave now, and forget what has happened today", the soldier spat at Tofu's face yelling, "fuck you!" and so, Tofu took the gun and slammed the base of the gun into the guy's mouth shattering some of his teeth; this time; however, Tofu became furious, he put the gun in the man's mouth and stated, "you have one chance to leave, otherwise I will splatter your brains out on this wall". The

defenseless soldier this time cracked and begged for his life, Tofu and Sola watched as he ran as fast as he could out of the alley way; Tofu looked at Sola and asked “are you alright?”, she looked at him and stated “thank you” and began to walk out; before she could leave Tofu motioned to her, “Kurai would like to talk with you, if you’d like, then we can go to him after I finish getting supplies; I brought my bike, she looked at him and replied “that would be okay..” and so they went about their business.

Yashiharou remained
consumed with violence

In the war zone, Ash Kroft moved from building to building to reach the headquarters of the council; once he arrived on the scene, he saw the mass of soldiers defending the front of the building; therefore, he maneuvered to behind the building; there he waited until maintenance staff came to change shifts, he approached one of

them and covered the man's mouth and hit him in the back of the head with the back of his handgun, when he knocked him out; he dragged the body into the bushes and took the man's clothes for a disguise, afterwards, he approached the building and was allowed entrance into the back by the standing guards. Once Ash Kroft was granted access, he approached the front desk and began talking with the receptionist, "crazy times, we are going through"; the receptionist looked up and replied "yes, these rebels are very troublesome, so how can I help you?", Ash Kroft looked at her and stated "Mr. Kane ordered a cleaning of the conference room, I'm here to do the work"; she looked him over a few times and despite her suspicions stated "oh alright, here is a key card to the elevator; just be careful, he might be in a bad mood"; Ash Kroft looked her in the eyes and stated, "thanks for the advice, I'll keep it in mind" and winked at her, she blushed and

handed him the keycard; then he went up the elevator. On the 5th floor, Ash Kroft overheard a meeting commencing over the current events and moved closer for a better listen, he pulled out a mirror and peeked under the door, 'looks like the security is lite, only two guards on the side', Kroft moved to the wall where the guards stood and set c4 explosives there and on the exits; after he made sufficient spacing, he denoted the devices, blowing a large hole in the wall, the blast killed the guards and shocked the council member, they shivered in fear under the large table installed in the center of the large room. Ash Kroft emerged from the wreckage and ran up to deputy of the council, Ringo Kane, he grabbed Ringo by the neck and put his gun to Ringo's head as he moved to the side of the room, he shouted "no one moved or I start killing people!", the other members dared not to interfere and stood stile, Ash Kroft pulled out a

zip line from his pouch and repelled it to the far side of the building attaching himself and Kane to it; meanwhile, the guards heard the loud explosion and rushed the building; they tried to make their way through the rubble but they were beset by the thick concrete blocking them; the leadership on the scene ordered a squad to grab equipment to clear the area out. Ash Kroft forced his captive to rush across the street in a covered area, the canopy of the trees covered the sky for a tactical cover, Ash Kroft pulled a radio out of his utility belt and message “ this is marine delta, looking for dispatch at coordinates prescribed in operation, a reply came from the radio “roger that, proceed north west 2000 Meters; there is a transport waiting for you” told the voice.

“Affirmative” replied Ash Kroft, once he ended the radio transmission, he ordered Kane to move to the destination, “you think you are clever, but once the council gets hold of you, you’ll be

executed” told Ringo Kane in spite, Ash Kroft
grind at the defiance and replied, “let’s see who is
left in charge, maybe you are right or maybe it
will be your head on the guillotine; I’m not the
judge; I’m merely here to arrange the meeting”,
they duo headed to and made it to the
rendezvous point, a Cathedral vehicle was
waiting; guards took Ringo from Ash Kroft’s
possession and placed him in the back of the
vehicle, a member met Ash Kroft through a
window in the driver’s seat; “Congratulations,
this job you’ve done for us, is a large step
towards our victory in the battles, beyond this,
we have one more job for you according to our
agreement, and in accordance, Bishop Reinhardt
will declare a clemency for your previous
actions, your orders are to be on standby for the
negotiations; proceed to Yashiharou Plaza.” Ash
Kroft wiped the sweat off his forehead and

replied “roger that”; he backtracked and headed back into the woods.

Back at Tofu’s shop

The following day, Tofu rushed over to Yami and exclaimed “Yami, turn on the radio; I’ve heard there is going to be a big announcement!”, Yami looked over and shrugged “alright, let’s see what’s happening” and went to turn on the radio, “Good afternoon Yashiharou!, This is Jay Okyoubou speaking on scene at Yashiharou Plaza, we’ve just received material from our sources that there will be a major announcement from one of the council spokespeople regarding the current civil war between the Council and rebel forces, I can see someone approaching on stage, what’s that?, the speaker today appears to be Kasumi Masato followed by an entourage making the announcement; let’s see what she has to announce” stated Jay Okyoubou. Kasumi Masato began her speech with “thank you

everyone for showing up to this critical announcement today, earlier this morning Council officials met with rebel groups to discuss terms for peace for our great area, and we at the council have determined that it would be in the best interests of the people if we made some changes to government; first, The Council and the Cathedral groups have negotiated a power sharing agreement whereby elections shall be called in October; however, before that time; Bishop Reinhardt from the Cathedral will be sharing power of the executive with our top members. Second, all past crimes committed before and during the Council reign by members of the council will be investigated thoroughly by a committee composed of members of the Military, Council, and Cathedral & Partners. Third, new investigations into rebellious activity will be suspended until further notice; that is all for my announcement and I'd like to hand over

the platform to Bishop Reinhardt; the audience gave claps of appreciation, as the Bishop takes to the soap box. “Hello people of Yashiharou, I am excited to be part of this transitional period of the new government and I ask for your cooperation in our time of need. Now; today, my announcement will be short, the criminal trial of Hikari Ata for the murder of Arata Unmei has uncovered some new evidence to suggest that Mr. Ata was not responsible for the murder; therefore, I am here to declare that if Hikari Ata is found, then he will be acquitted of all charges against him; for our second topic, reconstruction of damaged property will begin soon; if you’ve been affected by the war; please file a report to the department of claims and they will get back to you as soon as possible; that will be all for today; and thank you” the Bishop proceed to walk down the stairs and left in his vehicle. Jay Okyoubou got back on the line and stated “that’s

the end of the announcement folks, until next time” Tofu turned off the radio and spoke to Yami, “hell of a thing, huh?”, “yes, it’s amazing what’s gone on; say do you mind watching over Eis, I’d like to step outside for a little while”, “that’s no problem, don’t mention it” replied Tofu and so, Yami went outside and walked towards the Plaza square, once he arrived, he saw a pylon near the center with a notice on it and some people gathered around, he moved closer to read it and to his shock, he read “NOTICE: This is a Challenge towards Capt Hif Krash of Yashiharou Police; show up at Shikiso Bridge by 6pm tomorrow or your corruption shall be revealed”, Yami thought the message over and contemplated *‘this may be very interesting to watch, I should go see what happens’*

During the chaos of paperwork, a duel is issued

At the Police station, one of the lower ranked officers relied the posting to Cpt. Hif Krash, “sir, have you seen the bulletin?”, Hif Krash looked at him with intense eyes, “if this son of a bitch wants a challenge, then I will defeat him and defend my honor, enough work for today; I will be back tomorrow” and so he left his office and returned home wondering ‘*who could it be*’. The next day, the sun began setting as Hif Krash arrived to Shikiso Bridge, in the distance he saw a man standing at the end of the bridge waiting for him, his opponent held two sheaved swords in his hands and approached Hif Krash, once he reached midway he stopped and spoke “you are a man, of some honor; that I can see; unfortunately, you’ve committed an action which I can’t allow to be forgotten; either one of must die here to today, and end the matter,” Hif Krash scoffed at this older man and replied “you old men have no place in this modern era, the time of

the Samurai has left us; however, I must defend my honor, so I will agree to terms to fight you, tell me; who is the man, I will be fighting this evening?” my name is Kurai Tenshi.

Chapter 12 Finale

{12}

“The challenge will be a duel of swords; take this blade, ” told Kurai Tenshi and then he threw one of the swords to Hif Krash. Hif Krash reached his right arm out to catch the weapon and wrapped his fist around the long handle. Kurai took position and placed his hands around his blade’s sheath, in reciprocal action Hif Krash readied his stance to strike. The tension of the two men grew tense, meanwhile in the distance bystanders hid behind cover and tried to get a look at the duel, Kurai glanced over at some of them and they hide back into the cover. Hif Krash moved forward shifting his eyes around, then he moved to the right and raised the blade

cutting diagonally upward, Kurai sidestepped the attack, pulling the blade out, slicing the air over Cpt. Krash's head, the Cpt. responded by pushing his shoulder into Kurai's chest, slicing downwards towards Kurai's right shoulder, Kurai took the impact of the blade into his shoulder; while he groaned from the pain, and then stepped forward piercing his blade into Hif Krash's chest; Hif began coughing up blood, Kurai used his left hand and lifted the blade from his shoulder and pushed Kraft's sword to the side, Kurai grasped his sword with both hands and removed the blade from the captain's body, he then impaled his enemy in the solar plex; as he removed the blade; Krash fell over to his knees; Kurai stumbled over to behind him and then asked, "Do you have any last words?", "Hif Krash mumbled "no" in response, then Kurai decapitated him; the body fell over onto the bridge; Kurai dragged the corpse and flung it into

the river and grabbed the severed head; and walked off with it into the distance. Chatter resumed with the locals reflecting on the events.

The sun sets with revenge
accomplished

The next day; the town folks gathered in the Yashiharou plaza and discovered Hif Krash's severed head mounted on a pike with a note stating "this man died as a result of a duel over honor; he has now paid his due and should be buried according to customs." In the Yashiharou residence, Kurai laid against a headboard propping his shoulder up, he managed to bandage the wound up; however, the pain emanating from it; prevented Kurai from getting the rest he needed. As he began to drift back to sleep; there was a knock on the door, "who is it?" asked Kurai, "it's Genso", Kurai replied "let yourself in" and so Genso proceeded into the room and shut the door behind him; Genso saw

his father sitting against the headboard and stated “I must say, the town hasn’t yet finished discussing the duel that occurred; tell me, is your wound severe?”; “I wouldn’t concern yourself, I’ve had much worse from the war, I’ll be alive and well, since I am needed for the citizens once I assume office beginning in October”, “that’s good to hear” replied Genso, “let me ask. Have you told Sola about the deed?”, Kurai looked his son in the eyes and stated “I’ve done this not only for her, but my long time friend; I couldn’t deal with that murderer being left onto the streets like that, fortunately, I was able to gather approval from the real power in charge”, Genso began pacing around. “Do you think the Cathedral and its associates will govern in a more ideal manner than the council?”. “Yes. they will behave because of their status as a minority; they need policy to justify their power, if not; they can’t demand authority on a foreign religion for power as may

be the case in other nations; most of their soldiers in the recent rebellion are not followers of their religion so they have a shaky control”, Genso replied “I suppose so, time will tell if you are right about this; on another topic; do you need any medical equipment for the meantime?” Kurai motioned to Genso and stated “I may not admit it publicly; however, western medicine seems to be more efficient; I realized this information from my travels; bring me some painkillers from the distributor”; “alright, I’ll see what I can do,” replied Genso, “thank you” and so Genso left the room and headed to the Yashiharou Plaza.

At the gates of the Cathedral, a jaded Ash Kroft arrived, and knocked on the entrance, he was let in the compound by the monks, once he made it to the main building, he was greeted by the priests who led him to Bishop Reinhardt’s office, from the cracked door came, “please, come in my

office, Mr. Kroft”; and so, Ash Kroft entered into the office and sat down in the guest chair. Bishop Reinhardt began with “you’ve fulfilled your obligations, therefore I am happy to tell you that, I’ve announced the dismissal of Hikari Ata trial; therefore, it is currently on hiatus securing your status. Next, your bank account has been unfrozen and the respected amount has been deposited for your work. Now I’d like to offer you one more job, this mission will do a great deal for the cause, and we shall use acquired Council funds to pay you top dollar,” Ash Kroft grunted, “what will this all important task be?” asked Ash Kroft, the Bishop continued with “we need you to locate and capture a difficult affiliate of the Council, his name is Teiden, he is a strong fighter and has not accepted the results of the conflict and has retreated from Yashiharou with some compatriots, sources tell me that he has been spotted in Odatykatsu, I would recommend you

begin your search there” stated Bishop Reinhardt. Ash Kroft thought for a few moments and replied “I’d like to say that I could guarantee a live capture, but unfortunately I can’t, given the alleged skills of the target” Reinhardt replied “he might be containing useful information, therefore, if you bring him back alive, you shall be paid 150% of the total agreed to previously”, “very well, I will accept the contract”, he leaned on the desk and signed the contract and spoke hands with the Bishop, after that, he headed outside to his next mission.

At the Yashiharou Hospital

“Paging Dr. Takedo” announced a nurse on the intercom, “he will be here shortly” told the nurse to Genso and Nic and so they sat down in the waiting room of Yashiharou Hospital’s second floor, after 20 minutes;the doctor arrived, the doctor motioned to the duo stating “come here

you two Kaufspalding is waiting for you” so Genso and Nic walked to the patient’s room, Nic grabbed the door handle and after some hesitation opened the door, there Dr. Kaufspalding laid in bed, sitting up against the headboard, “it’s nice to see you both” stated Kaufspalding overcoming a rough cough. “I’m glad to see you doing alright professor stated Nic, Kaufspalding then looked at Genso and motioned to him, “come closer, I need to speak with you” so Genso approached Genso’s bedside and leaned over to hear the message from Kaufspalding, there is something that you need to hear, there are some files code named “Meiji”, I need you to move them, there will be an attempt on my life soon; therefore, you must hurry”, Genso looked at him bewildered, Genso spoke “we can move you to safety, we can protect you” Kaufspalding smiled and replied “unfortunately, that is not going to happen; however, if you do what I have

to say, then the research will go on, go now, hurry!” Genso reluctant, headed to leave the hospital to make it to Kaufspalding’s lab. Just Nic and Kaufspalding remained in the patient’s room, “you’ve made your decision” stated Nic, “yes, do as you will, I’ve accepted my fate” replied Kaufspalding, Nic approached Kaufspalding’s bedside, and then pulled a knife out of his belt loop and moved to cut Kaufspalding’s neck, when he made it a few centimeters away, an explosion erupted in the hospital room, in the parking lot, Genso peered back at the room that was now on fire, the fire consumed the wing of the hospital, the alarms blared and the Yashiharou fire crew scrambled to make their way into the lot to put out the fire, Genso wiped the tears from his eyes and moved to continue his mission to Kaufspalding’s lab.

Months later, the elections were held in October to elect the new members of the

government, Kurai Tenshi and his party took a lead in the new congress, they promised a desired peace to the recent civil conflicts and the resultant conflicts, their opponents; largely members of the Council were defeated by popular vote, yet this wasn't the end of the Council's political influence, instead of having power in Yashiharou, power was consolidated in Odykatsu; a land that maintained by a large industrial sector, an area where unions and corrupt dealings reigned supreme. With the alliance of the popular movement and the Cathedral, the political scene became stable; therefore, individuals who had faced danger were able to return, this included Yami Tenshi mother, Artesia Valentine, she arrived on the beachhead of Yashiharou, where a large gathering awaited her, "Welcome home!" announced the crowd, Artesia Valentine and her collaborators descended from the vessel, after

half an hour of socializing within the celebration, Artesia evaded the crowd and approached Kurai Tenshi, she hugged him and whispered in his ear “where are the boys?” Kurai motioned for her to step even further from the crowd, and began “a lot has happened since you left on your trip, i’d like for all of us to meet at once” told Kurai, “I’ll look forward to it, let’s arrange something this evening” replied Artesia, “I’ll arrange it, come home at 20:00 hours” stated Kurai, “that’s great, I’ll ask for the time” told Artesia and so she returned to the party.

Later that same evening, at the Tenshi residence, Kurai Tenshi let in Artesia into the home, Kurai walked to the staircase and called “come down here boys!, your mother is home”, hearing their father; both Genso and Yami came down the stairs, when Genso saw Artesia he ran to her and hugged her while Yami maintained a slight distance, Artesia acknowledged Genso and

then called to Yami, “come here, my son”; Yami slowly walked up to his mother and also hugged her; afterwards they sat down at the kitchen table, Kurai walked into the kitchen and grabbed the food he had prepared out of the oven and called Genso “son, set the table for me please”, Genso walked in the kitchen grabbing the plates and utensils and set the table for dinner, once they got started with the meal Genso asked his mother “how was your mission?”, “I think the mission went very well, had the Council not make trouble back home, I would have been back much sooner,” Kurai Tenshi put his hand on Artesia’s shoulder, “that is the past my dear, I’m sure that you did what you could”, Yami waited until his father finished and spoke “will you be working with father more due to the recent election results?” asked Yami. Artesia thought for a moment and began, “I suppose I will, I hope he doesn’t give me too much trouble” she laughed

and the rest of the family laughed. After the family finished dinner, each of them stood up from the table and went on their way until Artesia approached Yami stating, “I’d like to have a word with you”; and so, Yami and Artesia went to the outer room and Artesia shut the door, Artesia began with “tell me, how did it feel?”; “how did what feel like?” asked Yami with great curiosity, Artesia smiled and continued “sources close to me have relied that you showed an extraordinary ability in your fight against the Council, particularly your battle against Teiden” stated Artesia. Yami maintained a stoic pose, “I see that you are aware of the recent events that have gone on during your absence; yes, there were phenomenon I can’t explain well that happened during my battles, my emotions were very overwhelming during that battle, I just wanted to save Apollo from an untimely death; that’s all I can say for sure”, Artesia approached

him and stated “it’s alright, I understand your feelings; let me share a secret with you; you aren’t the only one with significant abilities; I also have abilities; but they can be used in a different way”, Yami looked up towards Artesia in shock, “what abilities do you have?”, Artesia smirked and replied “I don’t want to reveal everything, but let me say that I can predict certain events and outcomes that others cannot see clearly, it’s part of the reason why I have this role as diplomat, it is a useful ability in my toolkit”, Yami thought about what was said and then Artesia continued with “I won’t tease you too much, why don’t we’ll do a little experiment, I’ll show you some of the ability”, “alright, go ahead” stated Yami. Artesia moved to the far side of the room, she announced “listen to my voice, look into my eyes, now look to the ground,” Yami stared at the ground, “look up, now, Yami looked forward, the room’s walls were caving into the floor, a

whirlpool surrounded the front of his eyes, the colors were draining down into the abyss, Yami felt his mother's fingers on his forehead, "tell me son, how is the girl's status?", "let me clarify, how is the girl you have fallen for, how is her condition?", Yami replied, "what?, you don't mean..." before he could continue Artesia interrupted "yes, Eis Hiroshi, how is she?"; Yami thought and replied "she seems stable, I hope she recovers soon", "I think you will have the fortune, time is a great healer", replied Artesia. "How did you know about her?" asked Yami. Artesia released the illusion on Yami and told him "Human's minds operate using electrical signals, passing through synapses; one of my abilities is the ability to be sensitive enough to pick up these signals, you were thinking about her, so I determined she was important to her; I assure you; mind reading is far too complicated; rather its ability to intercept electrical signals

that I possess, some people call the ability telepathy.” In astonishment, Yami asked “how did you learn this ability?”, Artesia cleared her throat and began “during the war, there were a few times where I was in a dangerous situation, during that time, something just snapped inside me;therefore, I was able to help the people I cared for to survive; Peng Kane was still alive at the time, and I consulted with him the events that happened and he told me secrets about this world that have been passed on through special individuals throughout the generations; these abilities he said, were a byproduct of human evolution throughout time, it can be comparable to such malformations that are known to exist in mental changes and chemical imbalances, humans not only gained in time: depression,anxiety and suicidal thoughts, but also, abilities that could promote the species such as ours," Yami replied with a skeptic attitude, “if

this is the case; why hasn't this been revealed to the public, after all; I'd imagine such as story would cause a sensation to the public", "it is because, these abilities only show up in times of dire need; since most people never achieve to push their minds to the full potential; many of thoses with the genetics never active the abilities; and one they do; the governments of the world put the abilities for use in war, therefore; no independent validation will come out that is taken seriously to vouch for someone on the podium and instead, a mockery or cover up is put out to displace any claims of special ability" stated Artesia; "tell me, what does Peng Kane have to do with these abilities?" asked Yami, "why do ask that?" asked Artesia; "are you unaware of Star and Shiloh?", Artesia looked at the ground, and stated "I have heard of those names before, Peng Kane made a journey, and after some events which would take too long to

explain, led to some other world creatures to come to our world, if they had opened Peng Kane's chest, then they would have an incredible ability to rule this world", "how is that possible?" asked Yami. "It is possible because Peng Kane acquired the knowledge of technology far ahead of this time period; whoever controlled this technology could easily subjugate anyone in their way, that was only part of the treasure trove Peng Kane left behind; there were other elements there, but he never told me about them; only that a person of true ability and soul could open the chest; and Star and Shiloh must have seen that personality in you" remarked Artesia. Yami soaking this new knowledge in continued with "what are the deities such as Star and Shiloh?", Artesia looked downtrodden, "they are the overlords of the other realm, they are tasked with maintaining order in the world; however, sometimes, an ethereal being or two may have

their own interests and ambitions and thus in your case, they must have wanted sole control of our planet.” Yami chuckled, “I guess, otherworldly beings aren’t that different from humans, tell me; there is the case of Hikari Ata, who took the deities to another realm, do you think it will be possible to retrieve him safely?” “what realm did he transport to?” asked Artesia. “I’m not sure, I opened the portal without much conscious, after the 3 went through, the portal closed” stated Yami. “I see, in that case, I can give you advice, one of the abilities available in the chest of Peng Kane and his corresponding writings, is the ability of interpretation; if you can find the chest and open it; then you should be able to interpret your powers and thus find Hikari Ata, tell me; where has his brother gone?”, “Apollo Ata, has gone to train with Kwak in the establishment of ‘the Followers Of Light’, run by Kwak, he seems like a reputable master of the

way”; Artesia stated, “Peng Kane mentioned some of his contemporaries who included Kwak; Apollo will learn a lot from him; I would suggest that you let him train in peace, his fighting abilities will come in use in the future”, “if that is the case, where do you think I should go?” asked Yami Tenshi, Artesia Valentine began with “Genso should continue working on Dr. Kaufspalding’s steam research, in your case, you should venture out to find the chest; since the deities hadn’t revealed to you where it is, it will take more time to find it, though I do have some strong suspicions on where it is”, “please tell me where I can find it” asked Yami. Artesia walked to the doorway, “I have a feeling you will leave once I tell you, so let’s enjoy some family time before you leave” and so she left the room with Yami standing there with a lot on his mind.

At Tofu’s shop, Eis began to open her eyes, after her eyes were fully open, she sprang up and

sat up against the bed frame, she touched her hair and groaned “where am I?” after a few minutes, Tofu walked into the doorway to peer in, he saw her sitting on the side of the bed and rushed inside the room. Tofu asked Eis, “how are you feeling?”, “I feel alright; although, my thoughts are a little fuzzy, say where are the others?” Eis questioned, “the others aren’t here now;however, I can call them to come over, hold on just a moment” and so, Tofu left the room and walked to the telephone, he dialed the phone number of Eis’s father and the others. After a short while, the group reached the shop and visited with her, at the end of the meeting, Eis’s father motioned for her to return home with him. “Just a moment father, I’d like to speak with Yami,” her father obliged and left the room. Yami approached Eis while she sat in a chair, she began with “I just wanted to let you know that I had fun in our time together, I felt should tell you

that,” in response, Yami’s cheeks blushed, “yea... I’m happy we could hang out before this mess happened.. So tell me, do you remember the battle?” asked Yami. “yes... the experience was awful..” stated Eis Hiroshi. “what do you mean exactly?” followed Yami, “it’s hard to explain, but when that woman, Shiloh struck me, I felt a part of me enter a strange world, something I’d never experienced before; yet there was energy everywhere; it was interesting because it was neither good nor bad; in fact, it was so interesting that I almost didn’t want to leave...” and she stopped talking, covered her eyes and began crying. Yami grabbed Eis’s shoulders and with a stern tone stated “listen to me, think harder about the experience, it might help us find Hikari”, Eis stared at Yami in shock, “what happened to Hikari?” asked Eis, “he made a decision to take the sisters with him to their realm, the more we know about that place, the

more we can prepare to rescue him..to get him back here” Eis sat still without saying anything with a frustrated look on her face. Yami waited and then stated “if you remember anything else, go to the laboratory of the late Dr. Kaufspalding, the one Genso works at, he and I will be preparing a strategy” Yami finished and left the room to head towards the laboratory.

At the Laboratory, Genso shouted “yes, come in”, Yami Tenshi entered the laboratory; Yami shook his brother’s hand, “good to see you”, listen it just escaped my mind until now, that you never told me what you found on your journey to the islands when we went searching for Hikari Ata”, Genso pondered for a moment, and then stated “to begin the fable, I thought the events that transpired were a little too far fetched, but since all that has transpired since then, I feel as if now is appropriate as ever to explain” Genso continued his monologue with “when I reached

...., I found a sandbar close to the shore of the main island, where there were a set of torii standing there; I approached the first one and when I went to step through; it felt as if a barrier was keeping me from entering; after a few more fruitless tries I went to walk back to the Cessna when I was approached by an older woman, she told me that; her late husband had been a watchkeeper of the area and once he died; no one was able to enter the torii afterwards; though, when I asked her if there were any sort of messages left behind; she showed me some old writing, which I took note of and made a handwritten copy of; then I returned back to Yashiharou and worked on deciphering the meaning; from what I understand, there is a need to bring a special energy to unlock the gate; perhaps, it's time that we both go to check it out.” Yami put his left hand on his forehead and pointed to his temple, then he said “Artesia

mentioned that the island you went to was a special site; maybe even the site of Peng Kane's treasure; I will go with you; let us leave soon" and so the duo prepared their belongings and entered the plane to take off. After the hours passed, a storm looming overhead; Genso Tenshi was piloting in the front cockpit while Yami was the rear navigator; as they approached the site of the toriis; a lightning strike hit their aircraft, **bam**! The fury of the sky, hit the right wing of the Cessna and the plane dived in altitude; Yami hit his head on the front of the cockpit and his vision became blurry; the plane crashed into the ocean, leaving the brothers to sink into the depths of the ocean; as Yami lay there wondering, his vision blacked out.